Bestselling Author

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EXORCIST

VOLUME TWO

SPIRITUAL BATTLE LINES

With Marian and Angelic Prayers

EXORCIST

(Volume Two)

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FR. JOSE FRANCISCO C. SYQUIA

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(Volume Two)
Spiritual Battle Lines

Fr. Jose Francisco C. Syquia

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I dedicate this humble work
to Mama Mary;
I place it and all who would read it
under her mantle of love
and protection.

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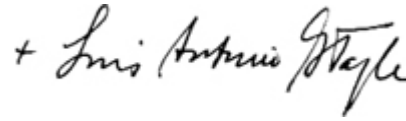
FOREWORD

We cannot thank Fr. Jocis enough for this second volume of his book on an area of our spiritual and ecclesial life that he knows by heart. This simply reveals how he has continued to grow from study, ministry, and prayer. I personally congratulate Fr. Jocis as I encourage him to pursue with humility and love this special service in the Church.

Although many people might think that the ministry of exorcism is way beyond their grasp, the truth is that the reality dealt with by exorcists is one of the most common of human experiences. All of us are in touch with the innate goodness that God our Creator has put in our heart. We hear the voice of conscience, the "original memory of the good and the true" that is part of our being human. We cannot deny the goodness that is within us as a gift of our Creator. Yet we also live daily with the assaults of the tempter. We can recall the many times we have allowed ourselves to be deceived by his false claims. The evil one is real and active. He relentlessly pursues human beings in order to destroy and kill. The more serious cases that exorcists handle are connected to the attacks from the evil one that we hardly notice.

Fr. Jocis' experience as codified in this book is a resounding affirmation of Christian faith and hope. We confess that God is all good. In Jesus we have come to know that the evil one had failed to stain the purity of God's love. The Holy Spirit has been poured into our hearts and on the Church so that the power of the name of Jesus the Risen One may vanquish our fear. In the love of God victorious in Jesus, we are more than conquerors in the face of trials, persecution, temptation, and death. This is the truth proclaimed by the ministry of exorcism. In our daily prayer for deliverance from evil and the performance of good actions to defeat evil, we share in that ministry. I pray that Fr. Jocis' book may confirm us as bearers of Jesus' triumph over evil.



Most Rev. Luis Antonio G. Tagle, DD
Archbishop of Manila

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I wish to thank all those who have helped me in the completion of this present volume as well as the first volume in this series.

For her feedback and insights, I wish to thank my mother. She has also helped me in remembering details that I had already forgotten in my own life. I take this opportunity to thank her especially for her continued loving support and prayers for my priestly ministry.

For her invaluable assistance in my research and helping in the editing, I am grateful to Sr. Lei Macoy, FMA.

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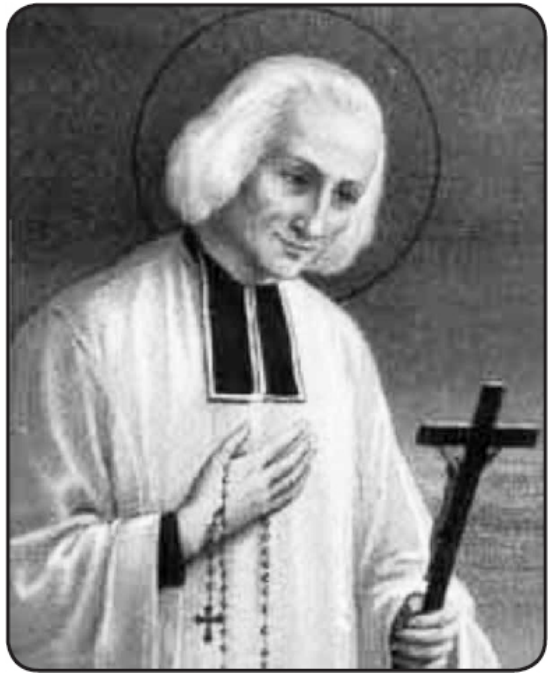
May God reward you all.

Fr. Jose Francisco Syquia



ST. JEAN MARIE VIANNEY
(1786-1859)

Patron of priests. Referred to as the "Curé d'Ars." *He is internationally notable for his priestly and pastoral work in his parish which is attributed to his saintly life, mortification, his persevering ministry in the sacrament of Confession, and his ardent devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Philomena. For thirty years he spent sixteen to twenty hours a day in the confessional. For thirty years, too, he was tormented by the demon.*

INTRODUCTION

Anyone who breaks off friendship with Jesus, casting off his "easy yoke," does not attain liberty, does not become free, but succumbs to other powers.

—Pope Benedict XVI

The Priest and the Devil

It was to be expected that the devil would be enraged at the sanctity of the parish priest of Ars and at the triumph of faith and conversion that came about through him. For a period of 35 years, Fr. Jean Marie Vianney was unceasingly harassed by the devil. First, he was attacked through a series of internal temptations of great violence. During the time of grave illness, the devil tormented him by feeding his mind with desolate thoughts that at the moment he felt that death was near. He seemed to hear a voice within himself say, "Now is the time when you shall go down to hell." This thought kept replaying in his mind, trying to drag him to despair, but because of his deep trust in God, he recovered his peace.

The battle was just starting. Then came the time for physical attacks. Every night, the parish priest or Curé heard the curtains of his bedstead being ripped. He thought that it had to do with rodents. He placed a pitchfork near the head of his bed, hoping that it would drive away those "rats." Every time he heard the noise, he would shake the bed curtain using the pitchfork but the more he frightened the "rats," the louder the sound of the ripping became. It made him impossible to sleep even for a few minutes. He got up the following morning, expecting to see the curtains in shreds but to his amazement he found them undamaged.

The devil continued his assaults. In the stillness of the night terrible blows were struck against the presbytery doors and loud shouts were heard in the yard in front of the presbytery. The Curé suspected that thieves were sneaking in to steal the rich offerings of the Vicomte d'Ars. He bravely went to check but saw nothing. For several days he heard the strange noises in the presbytery. Afraid to be alone, he requested the village wheelwright, Andre Verchere, to spend the

following night at the presbytery. Andre accepted the request, loaded his gun, and got himself ready for the "thieves." Shortly after midnight there suddenly came a fearful rattling and battering of the front door while within the house the noise of several heavy carts being driven back and forth through the rooms was heard. Deafening sounds filled the whole room; dragging, banging, and pounding were heard from everywhere. Andre seized his gun, looked out of the window but saw nothing. "For a whole quarter of an hour the house shook—and so did my legs," Valchere confessed. The following evening he received another invitation to spend the night at the presbytery but Andre had had enough. Vianney soon realized that they were not dealing with sinister human beings but with the powers of darkness, the devil. He knew that these displays of satanic tricks were fiercest when some great conversion in the confessional box was about to take place the next day, or, as he playfully put it, when he was about to "land a big fish."

These and similar disturbances were of almost nightly occurrence. They happened even when the saint was away from home—in the early years when he was still able to lend a hand to his fellow priests at St. Trivier. The very first night, strange noises disturbed the habitual peace of the presbytery. The priests accused M. Vianney of being the cause of the disturbance, for no sooner had he retired than the noises began in his room. The following night the occupants of the house heard the rumbling of a heavy cart being pushed around the room. The cart seemed to bang from one side of the wall to the other, and the whole presbytery shook. It seemed as if the house were about to crumble, and this brought sheer terror to the priests. They got up and at that moment an uproar ensued from M. Vianney's room. They thought that he was being murdered. Alarmed and filled with fear, they all rushed to his room and forced the door open, but all they saw was the saintly man lying peacefully in his bed, which was dragged into the middle of the room by invisible men. With a smile he said, "It is the *grappin* (it was his nickname for the devil) who has dragged me this far. It is he who has caused all this tumult. It is nothing… I am sorry I forgot to warn you beforehand. However, it is a good sign: there will be a big fish tomorrow."

Still, while Vianney was out of town, the devil set fire to his bed. The saint had just finished hearing confessions and was getting ready to celebrate Mass when he heard the people shout, "Fire! Fire!" He merely handed the key of his room to those who were to extinguish the flames: "The villainous *grappin*! Unable to catch the bird, he sets fire to the cage!" was the only comment he made. He then proceeded to the altar since he knew that the devil had wanted to prevent him

from celebrating the Holy Mass. It is worthy to note that the fire had consumed only the bed and its curtain. It must be remembered that at no time was a fire lit in the fireplace and that there were no matches in the presbytery. The fire started without a cause, so it died out in like manner.

The saint was never spared from demonic assaults even after a long and tiring day at the confessional. Even if he was extremely exhausted, he never let the night pass without reading the *Lives of Saints*. When it was over, he would stretch himself on his bed, and as he started to sleep, the enemy's aggression would suddenly begin. Shrill cries, loud shouts, and terrible blows awakened him. It seemed as if the front door was being smashed with a sledgehammer. The Curé d'Ars perceived the devil close to him, vigorously tormenting him although it remained invisible. Only its horrifying presence could be felt. Chairs were sent flying across the room. Heavy furniture was shaken forcefully as if in an earthquake. Then the hellish disturber of peace shouted, "Vianney, Vianney! Potato eater! Ah, thou art not yet dead. I shall get thee all right." With a loud roar it rushed to the curtains of the bed and shook them violently. Then it went on for hours producing disturbing and irritating noises. It made the noise of a wild horse leaping around the room, striking the ceiling with its hoofs and stamping with all four feet on the floor. The wonder was that it did not destroy the very old floor. M. Vianney always expected these disturbances when someone would seek reconciliation with God in the confessional, and attributed it to the envy of the demons for the good he was going to do. It was clear that the purpose of these horrible acts was to prevent the servant of God from getting that minimum of rest which his poor body required and thus to render him physically unfit to go on with his astonishing work in the confessional, by which he snatched so many souls from the clutches of the enemy.

On several occasions M. Vianney experienced the sensation of a hand passing over his face or of rats running over his body. One night, he heard the buzz of a swarm of bees but when he stood up and lit his candle, he saw no bees anywhere. There was also a time when he felt his couch, which was hard enough, becoming extremely soft and he was sinking into it. At the same time, a mocking voice kept repeating ironical exhortations that sought to lead him to sensual gratification. In his terror, M. Vianney crossed himself and the voice ceased. Another time, the *grappin* attempted to throw him out of bed by pulling away his straw mattress with vigorous strength, frightening M. Vianney. He made the sign of the cross and the devil left him in peace.

Not even the sister of the saint was spared from the attacks. On one of the nights that she was at the presbytery, she heard her brother leave the house to go to the church. It was before one o'clock in the morning. A few moments later, she heard a tremendous noise coming from near her bed. It was as if five or six strong men were striking the table with heavy blows. Terrified, she got up and lit a lamp. To her surprise, she found that everything was in perfect order. She thought that she was only dreaming but no sooner had she lain down than it began again. She got up, dressed quickly, and ran to the church. When M. Vianney returned to the presbytery, she told him what had happened. "Oh my child!" he replied, "you should not have been frightened: it is the *grappin*. He cannot hurt you: as for me, he torments me in different ways. At times he seizes me by the feet and drags me about the room. It is because I convert souls to the good God." This was how the power of darkness harassed him physically.

Knowing Marie Vianney's triumph over evil spirits made people seek his help to deliver possessed persons. A truly amazing incident happened on January 23, 1840 in the confessional of M. Vianney. A woman entered and knelt down at the feet of the saint. Nothing extraordinary could be noticed about her. Some persons were also there near the chapel awaiting their turn for confession. They saw nothing but they could hear everything. M. Vianney repeatedly urged the woman to acknowledge her sins and ask the Lord for pardon but she persisted in her silence. All of a sudden, a loud, boisterous voice was heard: "I have committed only one sin, and I share its beautiful fruit with all those who wish for it. Raise your hand and absolve me. Ah! It does happen at times that you raise it for me; for I am often close to thee in the confessional." "Who are you?" the saint asked. "The Master, the Chief," the devil answered. "Ah, black toad, how you torment me! You are always talking about going away. Why do you not do so? There are black toads that torture me less than you." "I shall write to the bishop to make you go out of this woman," the saint said. "Yes, but I shall cause your hand to tremble that you shall be unable to write. I shall certainly get you, *va*! I have defeated those that were stronger than you. And you, you are not yet dead. Without that… (here he used a word of repulsive roughness to refer to Our Lady) who is above, we should have you for certain; but she protects you, together with that great dragon (St. Michael), who is at the door of your church… Say, why do you get up so early? You disobey *purple robe* (the bishop). Why do you preach so simply? That makes you also pass for an ignorant man. Why not preach in the big style, as they do in the towns?"

These diabolical blasphemies lasted for several minutes. They were

aimed against the bishops, priests, and to the Curé d'Ars himself. Yet the harassing spirit was yet compelled to proclaim the exemplary virtue of the servant of God, even as he had been forced to do once upon a time in the Gospel, with regard to the person of the Lord.

The saint's unwavering faith amid such trials was rewarded by the extraordinary power God gave him to expel the evil spirit from the possessed and the strength he needed in a direct contest with sin through his exceptional work in the confessional. It is said that the Devil told St. John Vianney, "If there were three such priests as you, my kingdom would be ruined." The saint, for his part, developed a remarkable sense of humor about the supernatural assaults, saying, "Oh! The *grappin* and myself? We are almost chums."

Today, through the initiative of our present pope, Benedict XVI, this saintly parish priest is now the patron saint of all priests. If the patron of priests himself encountered continually the onslaughts of the devil, shouldn't all priests be knowledgeable and trained for spiritual combat against the forces of darkness?

When I completed the manuscript for the first edition of the book, *Exorcism: Encounters with the Paranormal and the Occult*, a number of years back, the Archdiocese of Manila Office of Exorcism (AMOE) was not yet established. The deliverance ministry in the Archdiocese was practiced only informally by a few mostly charismatic and religious priests. Exorcists were very scarce in our country and very few people in Manila knew that the Archdiocese even had one.

Since the creation of this office by His Eminence Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, cases have been arriving in our office at an alarming rate that we now have difficulty handling all of them. I learned, while studying in Rome, that this was the same reality even in the Diocese of Rome itself: the problem of a great number of cases, and the lack of men and resources to deal adequately with all of them. Even with the comparatively large number of exorcists in and around Rome, many get burnt out due to the large number of requests for help.

Here in our country, people are now more aware that the Church is able to respond to issues concerning paranormal and preternatural problems, and so the floodgates have been opened. People with spiritual difficulties now seek help from her, together with the desire to learn what the Church really teaches regarding these phenomena. Catholics are now turning to the Church for answers and resolutions, where before, they would seek them either from the New Age Movement or from our pagan and occult roots.

So many people in our country have had paranormal experiences and demonic attacks but choose to remain silent for fear of being ridiculed.

It is surprising how many people have come to our office telling similar stories of their experiences, their reluctance, and fear. We know even from the initial interview that these are not made up since they share very similar patterns. These people are very much relieved when they find persons willing to listen to them with understanding and patience after so many years of silent torture and confusion; they are just too happy to find out that they are not crazy and that there are others with similar experiences and encounter the same phenomena.

With regard to the number of extraordinary demonic afflictions (not ordinary which is temptation), I would like to stress that if one knew how to spot, and draw out evil spirits from persons, then he would realize the real extent of the demonic in today's world. The devil is so good in hiding that many do not believe he even exists or can attack in ways that can even be verified with the senses. But the Church has ways not only of discerning and detecting the presence of evil spirits in persons or places but also means of drawing these evil spirits out in the open for all to see.

Catholics are now again starting to understand that intermingling our Faith with our pre-Christian pagan practices and belief (not our cultural values) was the very sin that Israel, in the Old Testament, would most often fall into when the people were contaminated with the pagan practices of the nations that surrounded them. And it was because of this idolatry that Yahweh abandoned them to their enemies.

If one wants to have an idea of how our ancestors before the coming of the Faith lived and practiced their religiosity which was pagan/animistic in nature, look no farther than the Bible. During the time of the Exodus, all the lands surrounding Israel were animistic, worshiping a vast number of elemental gods and practicing occult rites and rituals to interact with them. Read carefully the practices of these pagan nations and you will notice the similarities with our own pre-Christian animistic practices; the rituals and occult powers are identical. In other words, it is the same idolatry. But what is more relevant for us to see is how Yahweh regarded these practices and how strictly he kept the Israelites from being contaminated by these practices; they were an abomination to him. See also how the prophets of the Old Testament regarded occult practitioners. They confronted them with the power of Yahweh which destroyed and unmasked their real demonic origins. Inculturation in our Church today is a beautiful thing where traditional values are handed down to the next generations; what must not be handed down are the practices that are based on our idolatrous past.

The guidance of the Church for the proper purification of our Faith from idolatrous elements is of primary importance due to the fact that folk religiosity is very much alive in our country.

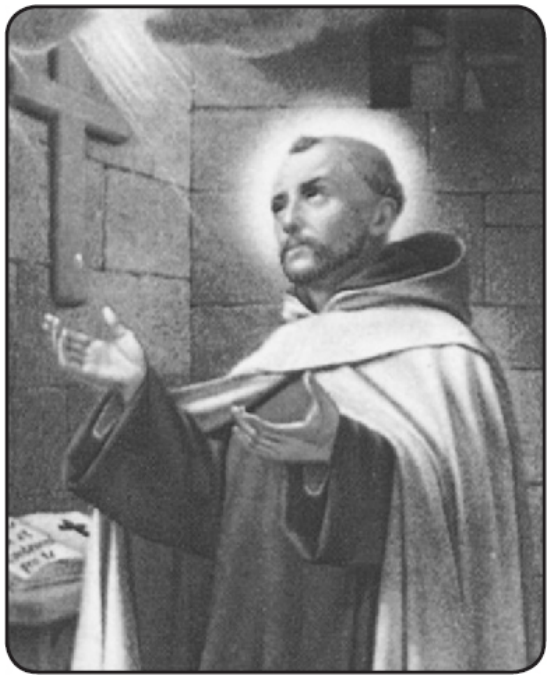
Discernment is always important because what is evil and demonic will always try to appear as something beneficial and good, especially, since we, as a people, are inherently religious in nature, quite sensitive to the spirit world all around us and continually seeking benefits from it. We have a tendency to be gullible and believe anything that appears to be miraculous and supernatural, without questioning whether they are from God. Just because there seems to be some benefit received from these apparently "miraculous" events doesn't mean that God is the source.

In our country, we, Filipinos, are so open to the world of spirits that we have what we may call, a natural religiosity; it is therefore especially vital for us to know the truth regarding this world of spirits.

Difficulties and problems arise when we try to interpret paranormal and spiritual phenomena without any guidance from God. Man cannot by himself know the truth of spiritual realities because man's capacities are limited; we are rooted in the material world and the world of the spirit is something we merely uncritically experience, just like a radio that picks up whatever is transmitted to it. What we need is to bring our subjective experiences to the critical light of our Faith which is none other than the light of God, the Creator of the universe, who knows and governs all things with his infinite wisdom.

Filipinos have the tendency to focus solely on the paranormal and spiritual experiences to guide their lives and to view and interpret the world around them through these experiences; if they try to understand better these occurrences, they usually turn to folk traditions for answers. Our folk traditions do not have the benefit of divine revelation. Today, especially in the cities, the Filipino is prone to search for answers in the New Age Movement, which is also a set of beliefs and practices without any benefit of divine revelation. The challenge for us, Catholics, is not merely to take a subjective and uncritical view of our spiritual and religious experiences but also to scrutinize them vis-à-vis God's revelation found in his Church.

God's revelation is truth and therefore it must be the standard when discerning the true from the false and the good from the bad. We must therefore always ask ourselves when dealing with paranormal and spiritual phenomena: What does the Bible say about these occult phenomena found in our country? What does Church tradition say about the varied paranormal incidents happening all around us? What do the saints, the experts in the spiritual life, say about our varied religious and mystical experiences?



ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS
(1542-1591)

Entered the Carmelites in 1563. He joined St. Teresa in her efforts to effect a reform in the Order. He founded the first men's house of the reform at Duruelo, the beginning of the Discalced Carmelites, and took the name John of the Cross. He wrote The Ascent of Mount Carmel, The Spiritual Canticle, *and* The Dark Night of the Soul *which placed him in the front rank of Western mystical writers. He is a Doctor of the Church.*

St. John of the Cross, a Doctor of the Church and an authority on prayer, warns us always to be discerning when dealing with so-called religious and mystical phenomena because there can be a lot of deceptions involved if one is not careful. These deceptions, instead of leading us closer to God, would do the opposite as well as affect negatively not only the spiritual life of the person, but also his psychological, emotional, and even physical integrity. Many times I have encountered in my ministry of exorcism this sad reality. The saints were always very careful and prudent when it came to mystical experiences since they knew very well how deceiving the devil can be in mimicking supernatural phenomena as well as how the human faculties can also be the cause of certain so-called "supernatural" experiences.

A concrete case in point is the so-called "elemental" spirits in the environment which so many sensitive Filipinos encounter. A discerning Catholic must ask himself, "What does divine revelation say about these creatures?" If we sincerely seek the answer in prayer and study, we can

discover the truth about them. According to divine revelation, the only created purely spiritual beings on this earth are the angels, both the good and the fallen, no more, no less. We should therefore not allow ourselves to be carried away by all kinds of strange occult teachings about spiritual beings, not mentioned in the Bible. In addition, we also learn through the experiences and teachings of the saints and doctors of the Church that the forms of these elemental spirits are merely outward appearances taken on by the fallen angels to hide their true nature. That is why those who are sensitive to the spirit world can easily notice the negative reactions to holy water and deliverance prayers of these elemental spirits, whether they be *dwendes, tikbalangs*, etc. For us, Filipinos, the only spiritual creatures we should be dealing with should be the good angels, especially one's guardian angel. We use prayer to develop our relationship with them. Prayer is the language of the Christian while magick is the language of the pagan. Let us call only upon God, the saints, and the angels, never the spirits of the occult and the elemental spirits who may promise power and "good luck" but at the price of one's soul.

Because of the many deceptions that the devil could produce especially when it comes to spirit world experiences, my advice to those experiencing certain "mystical" phenomena is to pray always to Mama Mary so she can lead you to the truth, to discern and to inquire from the Church hierarchy (very important!) so that we are helped to sift what is good and true from what is false and evil. If you have done your part in seeking advice and searching for the truth, lay it at her feet and simply and trustingly wait like a child and the truth will be revealed in God's time. Mama Mary will always lead us to the Truth, which is Christ, her Son. I have experienced this myself many times. We must do our homework.

We, Catholics, should learn to find out what God desires to teach us with regard to paranormal and mystical phenomena so that we may properly understand their place in God's overall plan of salvation as well as to respond adequately to them so that in all things, God may be glorified and pleased and we, sanctified. Unless we learn to view them within this context, these realities will remain outside of our faith life and remain untouched by the Gospel. It may take then a life of its own, affecting us in many unseen ways. As with our day-to-day lives which should revolve around our relationship with God, these phenomena should also revolve around it.

Hopefully, this humble work will aid in the purification of the great gift of God to us, our Catholic Faith. I also hope that this may lead others to a deepening of their relationship with God, the angels, the saints, and especially our Blessed Mother, Mama Mary. The relational

dimension of our Faith tends to be lacking since, as the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines states, we are a people sacramentalized but not evangelized, that is, we have a tendency (due mostly to our pagan/animistic past) to focus more on the external rites and rituals of our Faith to the detriment of the interior dimension. We therefore see the consequences, which are legalism, a utilitarian religiosity, and a split-level Christianity.

This volume is entitled *Spiritual Battle Lines*, for it focuses on two lines drawn in the spiritual battlefield. On one side we find our heavenly allies as they wait for our call to assist us especially when the conflict is at its worst and the second battle line drawn by the forces of the devil and his minions. Of course, they are already a defeated foe and will be cast down to hell at the final judgment, but they can still do damage to us here on earth if we are not careful. The great battle in heaven has been brought down to earth and the devil and his minions are fighting ferociously, for they know that their time is short.

This work will therefore focus on these two battle lines: the Church Triumphant and the angelic realm and on the other side, the demonic army. Focusing now on the individual chapters, the first three chapters will center on Mama Mary, our Mother in this spiritual war. The fourth chapter will focus on a most effective weapon given to us by our Mother for use in spiritual combat: the rosary. These chapters have been drawn from the writings of the greatest Marian saints in Church history. These works on Mama Mary by the saints are priceless treasures that have often been overlooked by us Catholics.

Chapter V gives a brief overview of the beginnings of the spiritual war between the Church, the Body of Christ, and the demonic realm. The next chapters, VI and VII, describe in more detail how the saints of the early Church confronted and destroyed the works and strongholds of Satan in the world using the authority and power unleashed after Christ's victory over the devil. Chapter VIII shares a few of the countless stories in the lives of the saints with regard to their encounter with the demonic. The stories are taken from the lives of famous saints who lived around the middle era of Church history. Chapters IX and X are the teachings and sayings of the saints with regard to spiritual warfare and include offensive and defensive tactics and strategies for spiritual combat. The next chapter is a short treatise on the angels based on solid Church teaching and the experience of the saints.

Chapters XII and XIII focus on demonology. These chapters are based on the bestselling book, *The Deceiver: Our Daily Struggle with Satan*, by Fr. Livio Fanzaga and of which I highly recommend. I have used this book as a basis for talks on demonology. I have, of course, added my own thoughts and learnings from other notable authors to augment the

author's teachings. Since both chapters are from the talks and lectures that I give, they will reflect the blending of Fr. Fanzaga's teaching on the subject as well as those of others.

Chapter XIV is a compilation of true-to-life demonic encounters of modern-day Italian and Vatican exorcists. All these stories as well as those found in the succeeding chapter are derived from the book of Fr. Francesco Bamonte entitled *Diabolical Possession and Exorcism.* Fr. Bamonte is a Vatican exorcist and was one of my professors on the course on exorcism in Rome. The final chapter dwells on the topic of heaven as the reward for those who do battle and triumph for the Lord in this ultimate and final of wars. May it serve as a reminder that this is the prize and true goal of the struggle.

This entire book is not about evil and the demonic per se but about God and his infinite and tender love for us. It is about his consuming and ever-seeking love for us sinners who, despite continually hurting him and putting up obstacles to his love with our sins and mistakes (which form bondages with the evil one), he searches for any opening in us to draw us back to him. It is the story of this powerful and faithful love that continually destroys the chains and walls that Satan puts up between God and us and walls which we sadly fortify through our own evil actions.

It is a love story of how, after turning our backs to him, we decide to return to our compassionate Father, just like in the story of the prodigal son, he runs eagerly to embrace us with forgiveness. He desires to heal our wounded past and all its remembrances, to cleanse us from the contamination of living with pigs (the devil and sin), to cover us with his cloak of protection, and restore us again to our true identity and dignity as his beloved children.

Hoping that this volume may bring more persons into taking more seriously God's love for them in their lives and their cooperation in tearing down all obstacles to it, I place this humble work and all who would read it entirely under the blue mantle of Mama Mary, beseeching always her maternal protection and guidance in all things pertaining to this volume. Through her intercession, may God be pleased and all glory be his.

PART I

MAMA MARY

CHAPTER I

Our Mother

While exorcists don't have a patron saint, many feel a strong devotion to Mary.[1]

Many exorcists invoke Mary during the Ritual. "The demon is so terrified of her that he will never pronounce her name. He'll say 'that woman' or 'she destroys me,' " says Fr. Amorth (chief exorcist of the Vatican). "The Marian prayer, especially the Rosary, is a very powerful weapon in the fight against Satan," explains Fr. Bamonte (well-known Italian exorcist). "That is why [Mary] insists so much that we pray the Rosary; the Rosary is a prayer that really whips the demon into a frenzy." On numerous occasions, Fr. Bamonte has beseeched Mary for help only to have the person he is praying over to say, "She is here!" or "You can't imagine what I would do to you if she weren't stopping me!"[2]

Present Place: Church

The middle-aged woman was trying with all her might to stop herself from becoming violent against the priest who was commanding the spirits to leave using the Latin prayers found in the Roman Ritual of Exorcism. I could see the effort that she was exerting, from the clenched fists, and tense bodily postures, to the grunts and growls that were emanating from her lips. Her eyes were closed with intense concentration, as she tried with all her might to check the violent impulses that were forcing itself out of her now rigid body. Although she would tell us later about these very strong impulses to strike the priest, I already knew that this was what she was truly struggling with. When I interviewed her days back at my office, I noticed at one point that she placed her fists under her armpits. She mentioned at the end of the interview that she did that because while I was interviewing, she had a strong impulse to hit me. So, while as the priest was commanding the spirits, and the woman was struggling, I

knew that nothing untoward would happen. I had encountered cases with the same violent and hateful impulses directed against me, and God, through the intercession of Mama Mary, always protected me during the prayer sessions, so that the violence would always fall short, never touching me physically. I knew that Mama Mary's mantle was always covering me from any harm that could come from the possessed person I was ministering to. I also knew from the previous interview that we were dealing with a spirit that specialized on violence and hatred. The person had acquired it through a traumatic experience that left her angry at God and therefore giving herself to Satan. I broke the consecration at the beginning of the session but it seemed that the spirits that were tormenting this young woman still had the strength to remain. The person had prepared for this session through the assignments that I previously gave her, like the availing of the sacraments and use of sacramentals as well as renouncing the consecration that she did years back.

Before the person came to me, she was at a charismatic meeting where she had reacted very violently and negatively during the prayers. The lay charismatic elders had a difficult time bringing the person's consciousness back from her state of crisis. I discerned that the spirits possessing the woman were spirits of hatred who had claimed ownership of the victim's body. The assignments I gave her should have hastened the expelling of the demons and yet they still had strength to endure the exorcism prayers; although their power had truly lessened since the person's consciousness now had the strength to remain in control and in the forefront.

After some time, I could see that we had to look for the reason why the spirits remained obstinate and would not yet leave. As Fr. Mateo, the exorcising priest, ended the prayers, I called the team for a meeting at the far end of the large and empty church. Fr. Jojo, the parish priest who also had the faculty to do exorcisms and who was also assisting us during this session, stood beside Fr. Mateo. It was already late in the evening, hence the back portion of the church was dimly lit and solemnly quiet. The other members of the team, three laypersons, followed suit. I took off the violet stole around my neck and sat down; the others gathered around to begin the discernment. Fr. Mateo as usual was in his brown Franciscan habit while Fr. Jojo and I were wearing our white ankle-length white albs. Fr. Jojo was still carrying the reliquary that carried a fragment of the True Cross. I had as usual around my neck a relic of St. Jean Marie Vianney, the patron saint of priests. As we discussed the case and I asked for the different opinions, inspirations, and charismatic leadings of the Spirit from each member of the group, there was a general consensus that

the reason the spirits were obstinate was because Mama Mary was not present in the life of this woman. I thought to myself, “Could our inspirations be true and that this seemingly religious person has some form of block with her relationship with our Blessed Mother?”

I approached the woman and sat beside her while the others sat farther back. I asked first about how she felt and then asked the question, “How is your relationship with our Blessed Mother?” She was jolted by the question. She said, “Father, you asked the right question!” She then added, “Since the time I got angry at God, I have cut my relationship with our Blessed Mother. I have no relationship with her even until now. I have never returned to her.” I did not anymore probe why she also got angry at our Blessed Lady but I felt that at this precise moment, she was ready to invite Mama Mary back into her life. I got hold of the Prayer of Consecration to Our Lady by St. Louis De Montfort and asked her, “Would you be able to pray now to her and ask her to be part of your life again?” “Yes,” she said with utter conviction. I brought out the Prayer of Consecration and told her to pray it with as much sincerity and intensity as she could. As she started to say the prayer, tears started to flow from her eyes and I knew then that she was truly praying from her heart and that she meant every word. I also knew from my heart that Mama Mary was receiving her consecration with maternal love and joy and that she would soon be free.

After the prayer, I motioned to Fr. Mateo to begin the exorcism prayers again with Fr. Jojo assisting him. As soon as the prayers started, the victim of Satan was no longer a victim but a freed child of God. All negative feelings and reactions from the evil spirits were gone! Instead, the young woman experienced intense peace and consolation flowing and inundating her heart. It was such a deep and beautiful experience that she placed one of her hands on her heart. It was not the exorcism prayers that freed her from the clutches of Satan but her consecration to Mama Mary. She was exorcised that moment when Mama Mary was invited into her life. The evil spirits within this now very visibly changed woman fled as soon as Mama Mary arrived. She was filled with joy and exhilaration as she hugged each one of us tightly as a sign of gratitude. Case closed! What a loving Mother we truly have![3]

Mama Mary’s Love for Us[4]

According to St. Alphonsus Liguori, “It was because the saints loved God so much that they succeeded in doing so much for their neighbor. But who ever loved God more than Mary did? At the very first moment of

her life, she loved God more than all the angels and saints did in the whole course of their existence." And, the saint continues, "Compared to it, the ardor of the seraphim is like a fresh, gentle breeze. Therefore, since neither angels nor saints surpass Mary in loving God, so no one, after God, loves us or can love us as much as Mary. And if we were to combine all the love that mothers bear their children, all the love of husbands for their wives, all the love of the angels and saints for their devoted clients, all this would not equal Mary's love for a single soul."

How confident in her protection must we then feel with so great a love for us; with how much trust we have in her when we call upon her for our needs and for strength.

I discovered for myself the truth of what the saints have always been saying regarding Mama Mary's interventions for her children.

My relationship with Mama Mary developed due to the countless times that she intervened on my behalf. I remember one instance when I was at one of my lowest points in the ministry. The devil was retaliating by allowing me to fall into all kinds of "bad luck" one after the other. It was so bad that even my fellow priests became alarmed when they saw this. I remember entering the chapel downheartedly and prostrating myself on the floor; with tears in my eyes and from the depths of my heart I pleaded to Mama Mary to protect me from these demonic harassments; and lo and behold, immediately the attacks ceased!

In fact, I ascribe to her motherly intercession, the blessing that my loved ones and I are now always protected from serious retaliations from the evil one.

St. Alphonsus continues, "Furthermore, Mary loves us so much because Jesus himself gave us to her when he said, just before dying: *Woman, behold your son* (Jn 19:26). He intended St. John to represent all men, as we observed above. These were the last words her son said to her. The last mementoes our loved ones leave us at the point of death are always cherished and can never be forgotten."

A beautiful and inspiring thought is the fact that, according to the saint, no one, not even the greatest saint, can love Mama Mary more than she loves and cares for us. He adds, "Yes, for Mary will never allow herself to be surpassed in love by her clients… in this respect Mary imitates our most loving Redeemer. She returns, to those who love her, their love doubled and redoubled in favors and benefits."

St. Bonaventure then was right in exclaiming: "Blessed are the hearts that love Mary! Blessed are those who serve her!" "In this contest, she will never be worsted by us, she returns our love and always adds some new favors to past ones."

And finally, St. Alphonsus tells us, "There are so many reasons for loving our most loving queen, that if Mary were praised throughout the

world—if in every sermon, preachers spoke only of her—if all men laid down their lives for Mary—still everything would be very little in comparison with the honor and gratitude we owe her, for the tender love she has for men, even for the most miserable sinners who happen to have the slightest spark of devotion for her."

A question that would be good to ask ourselves is this: "Do I have a real love relationship with Mama Mary?" and if we discover that our relationship with her is wanting, we can ask, "How can I develop a more intimate relationship with her?" "What concrete steps can I take to achieve this?"

Trust in Mama Mary

We, as Catholics, are called to have the fullest confidence and trust in our Mother. According to St. Alphonsus Liguori, "To all who love her and look to her for help in battle, Mary is like a strong tower surrounded by defenses. She contains all the shields and weapons they need to battle against the forces of evil."

And he adds, "Yes, in danger of sinning, and when beset by temptations, when in doubt how to act, remember that Mary can help you. Call on her and she will help you immediately. Never let her name be absent from your heart and lips. Follow her, and you cannot go astray. Pray to her and you will never despair. If she sustains you, you will not fall. If she protects you, you need never fear. If she guides you, you will never become exhausted. With her help, you will reach your goal. In short, with Mary on your side, you will surely reach heaven. Do this, and live!"

St. Bonaventure tells us that "even though she should ask for my life, I would still hope in her. Full of confidence, I hope to die before her image, and I know I shall be saved."

While St. Bernard proclaims, "O man, whoever you are, know that in this world you are tossed around on a stormy sea, rather than walking on solid ground. Remember that, if you want to escape shipwreck, you must never turn your eyes from this bright star which is Mary. Keep your eyes fixed on her and call on her. In dangers, in troubles, in doubts, remember Mary, call on Mary."

The Blessed Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget that there is no sinner on earth so far removed from God that he will not return to him and recover his grace, if he has recourse to Mary and begs her assistance.

She also said to the saint, "I am the queen of the world and the Mother of Mercy. I am the joy of the just and the gate that opens up to sinners the way to God. There is no sinner on earth so abandoned that,

while he lives, he will be deprived of my mercy. If he receives no other grace, he will receive at least the grace to be less frequently tempted by the devils than he would otherwise be."

St. Alphonsus exclaims, "Because his goodness is infinite, the king of heaven is most eager to enrich us with his graces. On our part, we must have confidence. To increase this confidence, God has given us his own mother as our mother and advocate and has supplied her with the power to help us. Therefore he wants us to place our hope of salvation and of every blessing in her... But hope in Mary, the Mother of God, who can really obtain grace and eternal life for men, is to do something very pleasing in the heart of God. For God desires to see Mary honored in this way, that same Mary whom in this world he loved and who loved and honored him more than all angels and all people together."

The Blessed Virgin revealed to St. Bridget that she is like a mother who sees her child surrounded by the enemy's swords. She wants to do everything in her power to save him. "And this I shall do for my children, sinners though they be, as long as they turn to me for help." There is no doubt, then, that in every battle against hell we shall surely win if we fly to Mary and repeat over and over: "We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God." O how many victories have the faithful won over the forces of hell because they had recourse to Mary with this short but powerful prayer!

St. Anselm says that we pray to her so that her dignity as intercessor may supply for our unworthiness. And he adds that when we invoke the Blessed Virgin with this kind of hope, it does not mean that we lack hope in God's mercy, but rather that we fear our own lack of the proper dispositions.

St. Bernard states, "Therefore, O sinner, never despair. Thank God, who has not only given his Son as an advocate for you, but, to encourage you to have greater confidence, has also provided you with a mediatrix who is able to obtain by her prayers whatever she wishes. Go then, appeal to Mary, and you will be saved."

Oh how sad to find in our country dedicated to the Immaculate Conception fallen-away Catholics (deceived through the false teachings of sects and cults like the Born-again Christians) put down the Mother of God. These persons fall into the trap of Satan who, to begin to destroy a soul, destroys first the great defense and protector that is Mama Mary. How painful to God and Mama Mary that these misguided former Catholics see our Mother as an obstacle to God. May Mama Mary protect us from such demonic deceits and may we, as Catholics, counter this abominable false teaching regarding Mama Mary whenever we are faced with it. As St. Alphonsus tells us, "When the devil wishes to make himself master of a soul, he seeks to make it give up the devotion to

Mary."

And the saint adds, "Just as Holofernes (conqueror) ordered the aqueducts to be destroyed so that he could capture the city of Bethulia, so also does the devil do his utmost to make men lose their devotion to the Mother of God. If this channel of grace is closed to them, the devil will have no trouble in winning them."

CHAPTER II

Mama Mary and the War for Souls

There was a possession case that we had to handle about a person who had been contaminated with the occult and occult practitioners. He was especially connected with someone who was well known and high placed in occult circles. He was not only deeply possessed but was also already starting to lose his sanity. Actually when we were ministering to him, he already manifested clear signs of psychosis. While we were discussing the case, a certain fear entered into my heart and I knew that this was a sort of signal that evil spirits were being sent to harass and block us from helping the victim. I even sensed that curses were being sent our way. I just knew it in my heart that this was to be no easy case. There was a sort of vague and subtle fear and dread that remained in my heart even after the interview. Later in the evening, I was inspired to seek greater assistance and protection from Mama Mary on this case. I knew deep in my heart that this was an inspiration from God. I then started an even deeper devotion to our Blessed Mother. As the days got closer for the deliverance session of the victim, I could sense a real and tangible presence of Mama Mary. Fear had gone out of my heart and a sort of renewed fortitude replaced it, ready to do battle with whatever spirits were possessing this person. When the day arrived for us to pray over the victim, the team, without my mentioning anything to them regarding my consecration of this case more to Mama Mary, experienced her presence. Joel, my brother and our legal adviser, spoke out during the beginning of the session that he had a strong sense of the presence of Our Lady; another member mentioned that when I would say the name, Mama Mary, during the prayers, she would sense a gentle breeze coursing through her. And because the case was truly under the mantle of Our Lady, the case which I thought would last long ended with only one session of deliverance and healing. The person was totally healed

spiritually and even mentally. He was released from psychiatric care after the session.[5]

Our Powerful Queen

In the lives of all the saints, we see a common denominator; they all saw the great dignity of Mama Mary.

According to St. Augustine, “Since Mary was found worthy to give flesh to the Divine Word and thus supply the price of our redemption, that we might be delivered from eternal death, she is obviously more powerful than all others in helping us to gain eternal life.”

And in addition, St. Augustine maintains that whatever we say in praise of Mary is slight in comparison to what she deserves by reason of her dignity as Mother of God.

St. John Damascene states, “The highest honor consists in serving Mary and belonging to her family, for to serve her means to reign, and to be governed by her is more than to have the power of kings.”

In addition, St. Alphonsus says, “Mary is now in heaven. Although she can now no longer command her son, nevertheless her prayers are always the prayers of a mother, and, as such, are so powerful that they can obtain whatever she asks.”

And “Mary,” says St. Bonaventure, “has this great privilege compared with other saints, that she is most powerful in obtaining whatever she requests from her son.” He adds that “just as her power with God exceeds that of all the other saints, so to the same extent she is also our most loving advocate and the one who is the most solicitous for our welfare.”

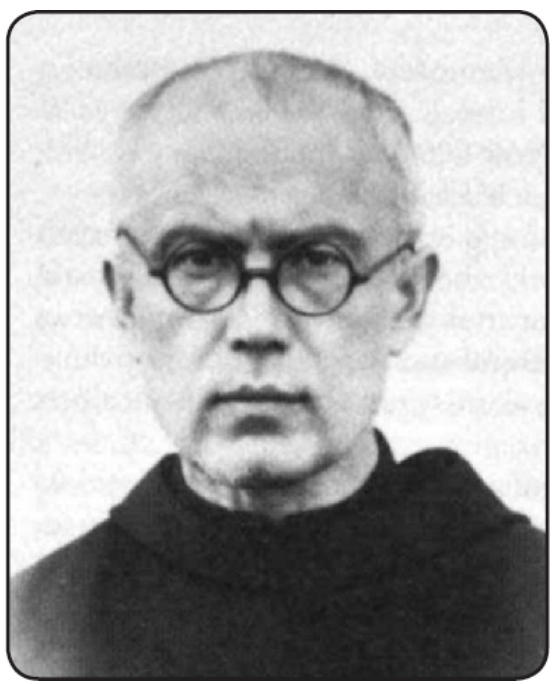
In fact, St. Bonaventure tells us that whenever the Blessed Virgin goes to God to intercede for us, she, as queen, actually commands all the angels and saints to her in her prayers.

We also learn that the devil admitted to St. Dominic that a single sigh of the most Blessed Virgin can do more than all the prayers of the saints together.

We end this theme with a statement from St. Alphonsus, “Yes, in danger of sinning, and when beset by temptations, when in doubt how to act, remember that Mary can help you. Call on her and she will help you immediately. Never let her name be absent from your heart and lips. Follow her, and you cannot go astray. Pray to her and you will never despair. If she sustains you, you will not fall. If she protects you, you need never fear. If she guides you, you will never become exhausted. With her help, you will reach your goal. In short, with Mary on your side, you will surely reach heaven. Do this, and live!”

Mama Mary and the Spiritual War

Mama Mary is God's most effective weapon against the devil. We find her mentioned from the beginning of the Bible until the end which is the book of Revelation. She is therefore very much involved in the history of our salvation and the ongoing war for souls. In the lives of the saints, we see this reality of Mama Mary's great role in spiritual warfare. As St. Pius X states, "Let the storm rage and the sky darken, not for that shall we be dismayed. If we trust as we should in Mary, we shall recognize in her, the Virgin Most Powerful, 'who with virginal foot did crush the head of the serpent.' " St. Maximilian Kolbe, who was martyred during the Second World War, states that "modern times are dominated by Satan and will be more so in the future. The conflict with hell cannot be engaged by men, even the most clever. The Immaculata alone has, from God, the promise of victory over Satan. She seeks souls who will consecrate themselves entirely to her, who will become, in her hands, effective instruments for the defeat of Satan and the spreading of God's kingdom upon earth."



ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE
(1894-1941)

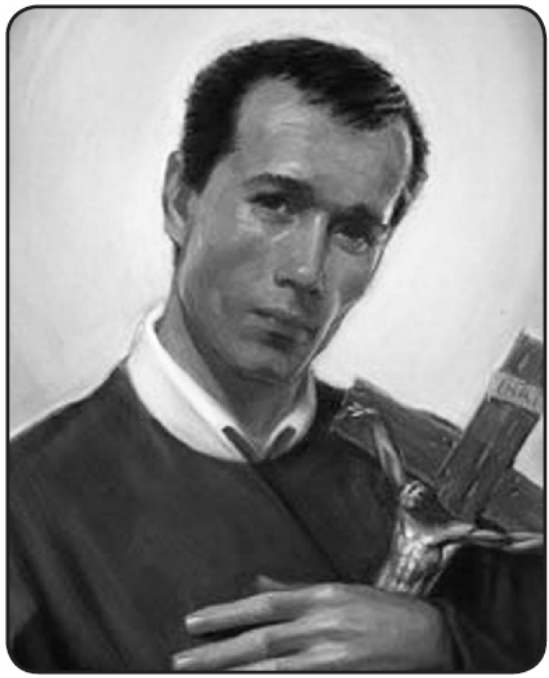
A Polish Conventual Franciscan. He founded the Militia of Mary Immaculate in Rome to advance devotion to Mary. He volunteered to die in place of a married man with a family who

was one of the men selected by the commandant to be starved to death in the Nazi concentration camp of Auschwitz in Poland.

Hence we see St. Alphonsus telling us that "recourse to Mary, then, is the surest way of overcoming all the attacks of hell." And he also mentions that "the demons of hell stay away from those happy souls who breathe forth the fragrance of devotion to Mary." This concurs with what St. Louis de Montfort teaches us: "While Mary is present, the evil one is absent."

In addition, St. Gerard Majella states that "at every moment you must trust in Mary most holy, so that she can assist you and overthrow your every enemy with her power."

In a revelation made to St. Bridget, she was taught that God made Mary so powerful against the devils that, whenever they attack someone who has called upon Mary for help, they are immediately terrified and leave off molesting that soul. They prefer to flee and to take a double dose of their torments, rather than see themselves subjected to Mary's power. St. Bonaventure exclaims: "No enemy on earth fears a powerful hostile army as much as the demons of hell fear the name and protection of Mary."



ST. GERARD MAJELLA
(1726-1755)

Lay Brother of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (the Redemptorists). He is the saint whose intercession is requested for children (unborn children in particular), childbirth, mothers (expectant mothers in particular), falsely accused people, good confessions, and lay brothers.

St. Alphonsus declares that “very consoling are the graces which Jesus Christ promised to those who are devoted to his mother’s name.” Our Divine Savior was heard by St. Bridget to say, “For your words, O Mother, are so sweet and dear to me, that I cannot deny whatever you ask.”

Especially when a soul is nearing death, he must have developed, by then, a deep devotion to Mama Mary.

St. Alphonsus tells us: “The devil, who has been tempting the soul during life, is not content to act alone in tempting the soul at death. He calls on his companions to help… when a person is at the point of death, the whole place is filled with devils who all combine in the attempt to make him lose his soul.”

But those close to Mama Mary must not fear because as St. Vincent Ferrer said, “This loving queen takes the souls of the dying under her protection and presents them to the judge, her son, and most certainly obtains their salvation.”

And St. Bridget heard from the Blessed Virgin, “Then will I, their lady and mother, fly swiftly to them to console and refresh them.” Also St. Bonaventure tells us that “Michael, the leader and prince of the heavenly army, with all his ministering angels, obeys your commands, O Virgin, and defends and receives the souls of the faithful departed who day and night have particularly recommended themselves to you.” And the saint also tells us, “Happy is he who loves your sweet name, O Mother of God! Your name is so glorious and admirable, that no one who remembers it at the point of death need have any fear of the assaults of hell.”

ST. BRIDGET
(1303-1373)

Patron saint of Sweden, and Founder of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity (the Brigettines) and Mother of St. Catherine of Sweden.

CHAPTER III

Stories of Mama Mary

The following are true stories narrated by St. Alphonsus Liguori regarding the intercession of Mama Mary in the lives of people who have been subjected to the attacks of hell. These stories can be found in the work of the saint entitled *The Glories of Mary*.

The following is an account regarding how Mama Mary came to console a dying person who was devoted to her.

> And if at that moment you are still frightened and lose confidence at the thought of your past sins, she will come and encourage you just as she did Adolph, the Count of Alsace. Adolph had left the world and became a Franciscan and was very devoted to the Mother of God. His days were coming to an end, and as he reviewed his past life—the government of his property and the treatment of his vassals—the rigors of God's justice rose up before his mind and he began to tremble for his salvation. Suddenly, Mary appeared to him, accompanied by many saints. Reproving the dying religious, she said to him: "Adolph, you are mine. You have given yourself to me and belong to me. Why are you so afraid to die?" At these words of Our Lady, Adolph felt immensely consoled. Every fear disappeared and he died peacefully and contentedly.

The following is another similar account.

> They tell of St. John of God that he was tenderly devoted to Mary and that he expected a visit from her when he was dying. He was disappointed when she did not appear immediately and even complained a little. First, Mary reproved him for his lack of confidence. Then she spoke to him these tender words that should console all who are devoted to Mary: "John, it is not my practice to abandon my client at this hour." As much as to say: "My dear John,

what is the matter with you? Did you think I had forsaken you? Do you not know that I can't abandon my clients at the point of death? I did not come sooner because the appointed hour has not yet struck. Now, however, the hour has come and I have come to take you. Let us go to paradise." Shortly after, the saint breathed his last and his soul took flight to heaven, there to thank his most loving queen forever.

The following is another true account of Mama Mary's appearance to a dying person who died in the state of grace and the contrast with another person who was not devoted to Mama Mary and died in the state of sin.

The pastor of a certain country village was called to assist at the deathbed of a very rich parishioner. The house was beautifully furnished. Servants, relatives, and many friends stood at the bedside but the good priest also saw devils, in the form of black dogs, waiting to snatch the man's soul. Snatch it they did, for the man died in sin.

While this was happening, the pastor was also called by a poor woman who lay dying and wanted to receive the sacraments. Since he could not leave the rich man who was in so much need of spiritual help, the pastor sent another priest, who took the pyx with the Blessed Sacrament and went to the home of the poor woman.

What a contrast! No servants here; no troupe of relatives; no costly furniture. Just a few scattered articles, and the dying woman lying on a pallet of straw. But as he entered the door, a great light filled the room. Near the poor dying patient the priest saw the Mother of God consoling her and wiping the perspiration of death from the woman's brow. At first the priest was loathe to enter, but Mary made a sign and bade him come and hear the woman's confession. Mary herself placed a chair for him at the woman's bedside. The poor woman made her confession, received Communion devoutly, and happily breathed her soul into Mary's arms.

Here is another account of Mama Mary's intercession for a dying devotee of hers.

The story is told that when St. Andrew Avellino lay dying, ten thousand demons came to tempt him. The conflict that he had with the powers of hell at his agony was so severe that the good religious at his bedside trembled with fear. They saw the saint's face swelling and turning black with agitation. They saw his limbs quivering and becoming frightfully contorted. Tears coursed down his cheeks and his

head shook violently. All this was an evidence at the frightful battle hell was waging against him. Trembling with fear to see a saint dying this way, the brethren in the room wept with pity and redoubled their prayers. They were consoled, however, in seeing that very often as if begging for help, the saint turned his eyes to a picture of Mary. They remembered how he had assured them that at the hour of death Mary would have to be his refuge. Finally, God put an end to the conflict and gave the saint a glorious victory. The contortions ceased; his face resumed its original shape and color, his eyes remained peacefully fixed on the image of Mary. Then, as if to thank Our Lady, the saint bowed to her and devoutly expired. It is piously believed that Our Blessed Lady had appeared to him at that moment. A Capuchin nun, who was also in agony at the same time, turned to the Sisters around her and said: "Say an *Ave Maria*, for a saint has just died."

The following is a true story of the power of the names of Jesus and Mary.

We read in the history of the missions in Japan that there was a certain Christian to whom many devils appeared in the form of ferocious animals. But he spoke to them boldly and said, "Personally, I have no weapon that you are afraid of. If God permits it, you can do whatever you want with me. But meanwhile, I am going to defend myself with the most powerful names of Jesus and Mary." He had hardly pronounced these names when the earth opened up and the evil spirits, howling horribly, cast themselves headlong into it.

Here in this true account from St. Alphonsus, we see the reality of the devil behind the occult and we also notice the reality of the pact with the devil which is especially found in witchcraft and Satanism. In the other practices of the occult, there may be no manifest pact with the devil but a bond with the evil one is also created. The devil changes his form (like into that of an elemental) so that the practitioner has no idea that he is interacting with the devil.

Both Vincent of Beauvais and Caesarius tell the following story. A certain noble youth, as a result of his vices, had been reduced to extreme poverty, so much so that he had to go begging. Confused and ashamed, he had left his hometown and took off to a distant city. On the way he met one of his father's former servants. Observing the young man's pitiable condition, the former servant promised to lead him to a wealthy benefactor who would give him all the help he

needed.

The former servant happened to be a sorcerer. He took the youth to a lake in the middle of a forest and began to speak to some invisible person. When the lad inquired to whom he was speaking, the former servant replied: “I am speaking to the devil.” The boy was frightened but the former servant continued his colloquy with the demon. “This young man,” he said, “has lost everything and would like to be restored to his former position.” The devil answered: “If he is ready to obey me, I shall make him even richer than before. But first, he must deny God.”

The youth was horrified. But the former servant continued to argue and cajole and finally the poor man agreed and denied his Creator. The devil, however, was not satisfied. “You must also deny Mary,” he said, “because Mary is our greatest enemy. See how many souls she snatches from our hands and leads back to God.” “Absolutely not,” answered the young man. “Mary I will never deny. She is my mother, my life, and my hope. I would rather spend the rest of my life as a beggar.” With these words he left the place.

As he continued on his way, he passed a church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. Tormented and troubled, he went in and knelt down before a statue of Mary. He begged Mary to intercede for him.

Suddenly, Mary appeared and began to pray for him. At first, her divine Son said: “But Mother, this ingrate has denied me.” Mary continued to pray, and finally Jesus said: “Mother, I have never refused you anything. Let the boy be pardoned, since that is what you ask of me.”

The man who had come into possession of the lad’s fortune happened to be a witness of the entire scene. Touched by Mary’s mercy, the man offered him his daughter in marriage and made him his heir. In this way Mary became the cause of his spiritual as well as his material rehabilitation.

ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI
(1696-1787)

Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (Redemptorists). He was declared Doctor of the Church in 1871.

The Lord allowed the person concerned to see the dialogue between our Lord and Mama Mary in order to bring into focus the dignity of Mama Mary and the love that Jesus has for his Mother. Mama Mary's mercy is a sharing of God's infinite mercy and her power over the devil is also a participation in God's infinite power over the kingdom of darkness.

Here is another story from St. Alphonsus showing a pact with the devil which is written down and signed by the person concerned. It is known that in Satanism, the written pact is signed with a person's own blood. In the exorcism of a possessed who made a written pact with the devil, the document is retrieved by the exorcist (by commanding the devil to produce it) and then destroyed.

Very well known is the story of Theophilus, Patriarch of Constantinople, as written by Eutychian, an eyewitness to the event. According to Fr. Crasset, this story is confirmed by St. Peter Damian, St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Antoninus, and others.

Theophilus was archdeacon of a church in Adana, a city of Cilicia. He was held in such high esteem that the people wanted him for their

bishop, but out of humility he refused the office. Later, some malicious people accused him of a crime, and as a result he was relieved of his charge. He was so bitter at this, that, blinded by passion, he sought a Jewish magician who put him in touch with the devil. The devil said that if Theophilus wanted help, he would have to renounce Jesus and his Mother Mary, put his renunciation in writing, sign it with his own hand, and then turn the document over to the devil. Theophilus wrote and signed the dreadful document.

On the following day, the bishop, realizing the wrong done to Theophilus, begged his pardon and restored him to his former position. Torn by remorse for the enormous sin he had committed, Theophilus almost fell into despair. He went to one of the churches and cast himself at the feet of Mary's image, where, mingling tears with his prayers, he said to her: "O Mary, Mother of God, I do not want to despair as long as I have you who are so merciful and can help me." For forty days he continued weeping and praying to the Blessed Virgin.

One night, Mary appeared to him and said: "Theophilus, what have you done? You have renounced my friendship and that of my son—and to whom? To my enemy and yours." "O Lady," replied Theophilus, "you must pardon me and obtain pardon for me from your son." Mary saw his great confidence and said to him: "Have courage! I shall pray to God for you." Encouraged by this, Theophilus increased his tears, penances, and prayers, and stayed before that image.

After a time, Mary appeared to him again and with a cheerful countenance said to him: "Theophilus, I have presented your tears and prayers to God. He has accepted them and has pardoned you. From now on, be grateful and loyal." "But my Lady," answered Theophilus, "that is not enough to comfort me completely; the devil still has that miserable document on which I renounced you and your son; you are able to restore it to me." One morning, Theophilus awoke to find the document lying on his breast.

The next day, when the bishop and a great throng of people were in church, Theophilus threw himself at the bishop's feet. He told the bishop all that had happened and turned the diabolical document over to him. The bishop immediately had it burned in the presence of the throng of people. The people praised God's goodness, and praised the mercy which Mary had exercised toward this sinner. Then Theophilus returned to Our Lady's church, where after three days he died a consoling death, thanking Jesus and his holy Mother.

In the next account, we see how the devil can take the form of an

animal and interact with persons in this form. In the lives of the saints, we see this phenomenon again and again; most of the time, the devil and his demons would manifest as animals to them. When an exorcism is said over a possessed person, the demon manifests in the body of the possessed also in the form of an animal, usually a snake.

In the Annals of the Capuchin Fathers, it was told how there was a famous lawyer in Venice who had made himself rich by fraud and malpractice, and was living a life of evil. There was apparently nothing good about him except that he was accustomed to recite a certain prayer to the Blessed Virgin every day. And it was this small devotion which enabled him to escape from eternal death through the mercy of Mary. This is how it came about.

It happened that this lawyer struck up a friendship with Fra Matteo da Basso. He invited the priest repeatedly to visit him and one day Fra Matteo accepted an invitation to dinner. When he arrived at the lawyer's home, the man said to him: "Now, Father, I want to show you something which you have never seen before. I have a wonderful monkey who acts as my valet, washes the glasses, sets the table, and opens the door." "It seems to me," observed the priest, "that we are involved here with something more than a mere monkey. Have him come here." They called the monkey, called him again and again, and looked for him everywhere but he seemed to have disappeared. Finally, they found him hiding under a bed in a remote corner of the house. The monkey would not come out. "Well," said the religious, "we shall have to go to him." So together with the lawyer he went to the spot where the monkey was hiding and said: "Hellish beast, come forth; I command you by the power of God to reveal who you are." The creature had to admit he was the devil and that he was only waiting until the day when the sinner should fail to utter his prayer to the Mother of God, because the first time that he did so, he had permission from God to strangle him and carry him off to hell.

When the poor lawyer heard this, he fell upon his knees and begged the priest for help. The priest reassured him and commanded the devil to leave the house without doing any harm. "But I give you permission," he said, "as proof that you have really departed, to make a hole in the wall of the house." No sooner had he said this than with a great crash a hole suddenly appeared in the wall, which, even though it was closed up several times with mortar and stones, remained open by the will of God for a long time; until, finally, on the advice of the servant of God, the owner placed in it a block of marble with the image of an angel on it. The lawyer was converted, and gave every reason to believe that from that time forth he would follow a

new way of life.

The narrative that follows, on the other hand, shows how the devil can appear in human form to deceive us. Both the preceding narrative and the one following show us the importance of having a devotion to Mama Mary and how the devil waits for us to lessen this devotion before making his attack.

> There was a nobleman of evil life who lived in a castle. By chance, a certain monk happened to visit him. Enlightened by God, the monk asked him to summon his servants. All came except the valet. When he was actually brought in by force, the monk said to him: "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to tell us who you are." The valet replied: "I am a devil from hell. For fourteen years I have served this miserable rascal waiting for the day when he would fail to say the seven *Hail Mary*s which he is accustomed to say, so that I could strangle him and carry him off to hell." The monk ordered the devil to leave, which he did at once, and the noblemen fell at his feet, was converted, and led a holy life thereafter.

In this final account from St. Alphonsus, we notice how effective a weapon the angelic salutation of the angel Gabriel to Mama Mary is against the devil.

> A woman from Cologne who kept up sinful relations with a libertine one day found him hanging in her room. Soul-stricken, she entered a convent. She was often tempted by the devil, even in visible form, and at a loss what to do to rid herself of his attentions. One of the Sisters suggested that she say a *Hail Mary* every time he appeared, which she did. With that, the devil said to her: "A curse on the one who told you to do that." And he did not bother her after that.

CHAPTER IV

Stories of the Rosary

St. Louis de Montfort tells us, “Arm yourselves with the arms of God—with the Holy Rosary—and you will crush the devil’s head and you will stand firm in the face of all his temptations. This is why even the material rosary itself is such a terrible thing for the devil, and why the saints have used it to enchain devils and to chase them out of the bodies of people who were possessed. Such happenings are reported in more than one authentic record.” And the saint adds, “If you say the Rosary faithfully until death, I do assure you that, in spite of the gravity of your sins, ‘you shall receive a never-fading crown of glory.’ Even if you are on the brink of damnation, even if you have one foot in hell, even if you have sold your soul to the devil as sorcerers do who practice black magic, and even if you are a heretic as obstinate as a devil, sooner or later you will be converted and will amend your life and will save your soul, if and mark well what I say, if you say the Holy Rosary devoutly every day until death for the purpose of knowing the truth and obtaining contrition and pardon for your sins.” Although it is very beneficial to pray the Rosary privately, praying the Rosary as a family or with a community is much more efficacious especially in spiritual warfare. St. Louis states: “When people say the Rosary together it is far more formidable to the devil than one said privately, because in this public prayer it is an army that is attacking him.”

The following true accounts from St. Louis de Montfort allow us to see how the Rosary is truly a powerful weapon against evil. The first story is found in the life of St. Dominic.

> St. Dominic had a cousin named Don Perez, or Pedro, who was leading a highly immoral life. When Pedro heard that his cousin was preaching on the wonders of the Rosary and learned that several people had been converted and had amended their lives by means of it, he said: “I had given up all hope of being saved but now I am beginning to take heart again. I really must hear this man of God.” So

one day he went to hear one of St. Dominic's sermons. When the latter caught sight of him, he struck out against sin more zealously than ever before, and from the depths of his heart he besought Almighty God to enlighten his cousin and to let him see what a deplorable state his soul was in.

At first, Don Perez was somewhat alarmed, but he still did not resolve to change his ways. He came once more to hear St. Dominic preach and his cousin, realizing that a heart as hard as his could only be moved by something quite out of the ordinary, cried out with a loud voice: "Oh Lord Jesus, grant that this whole congregation may actually see the state of the man who has just come into your House."

Then everybody suddenly saw that Don Perez suddenly was completely surrounded by a band of devils in the form of hideous beasts who were holding him in great iron chains. People fled hither and thither in abject terror and Don Perez was even more appalled than they when he saw how everyone shunned him.

St. Dominic told them all to stand still and said to his cousin: "Unhappy man that you are, acknowledge the deplorable state you are in and throw yourself at Our Lady's feet. Take this rosary; say it with devotion and with true sorrow for all your sins, and make a firm resolution to amend your life."

So Don Perez knelt down and said the whole Rosary; he then felt the need of making his confession and did so with heartfelt contrition. St. Dominic ordered him to say the Rosary every day; he promised to do so and he entered his name on the Rosary Confraternity list in his own hand.

When he left the church his face was no longer horrible but had a glow like that of angels. Thereafter he persevered in devotion to the Holy Rosary, led a well-ordered Christian life, and died a happy death.

ST. DOMINIC

(1170-1221)

Founder of the Order of Preachers. He established a convent of cloistered nuns, cradle of the future Dominican nuns. He preached against heresies and helped reform the Cistercians. His order is well known for combating heresies in the Church.

Another beautiful and true story regarding Mama Mary and the Rosary in the life of St. Dominic occurred when the saint was confronted by a possessed heretic.

When St. Dominic was preaching the Rosary near Carcassone, an Albigensian was brought to him who was possessed by the devil. St. Dominic exorcised him in the presence of a great crowd of people; it appeared that over twelve thousand had come to hear him preach. The devils who were in possession of this wretched man were forced to answer St. Dominic's questions in spite of themselves. They said that:

1. there were fifteen thousand of them in the body of this poor man, because he had attacked the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary;
2. they went on to testify that by preaching the Rosary, he put fear and horror into the very depths of hell and that he was the man hated most throughout the whole world, because of the souls which he snatched from them through devotion to the Holy Rosary;
3. they then revealed several other things.

St. Dominic put his rosary around the Albigensian's neck and asked the devils to tell him who, of all the saints in heaven, was the one they feared most, and who should therefore be the most loved and revered by men. At this they let out such unearthly screams that most of the people fell to the ground, faint from fear. Then, using all their cunning, so as not to answer, the devils wept and wailed in such a pitiful way that many of the people wept also, out of purely natural pity. The devils spoke through the mouth of the Albigensian, pleading in a heartrending voice: "Dominic, Dominic, have mercy on us—we promise you that we will never hurt you. You have always had compassion for sinners and those in distress; have pity on us, for we are in grievous straits. We are suffering so much already, so why do you delight in heightening our pains? Can't you be satisfied with our suffering without adding to it? Have pity on us! Have pity on us!"

St. Dominic was not one whit moved by the pathos of these wretched spirits and told them that he would not let them alone until

they had answered his question. Then they said they would whisper the answer in such a way that only St. Dominic would be able to hear. The latter firmly insisted upon their answering clearly and out loud. Then the devils kept quiet and refused to say another word, completely disregarding St. Dominic's orders—so he knelt down and prayed thus to Our Lady: "Oh, all powerful and wonderful Virgin Mary, I implore you by the power of the Most Holy Rosary, order these enemies of the human race to answer me."

No sooner had he made this prayer than a glowing flame leaped out of the ears, nostrils, and mouth of the Albigensian. Everyone shook with fear, but the fire did not hurt anyone. Then the devils cried: "Dominic, we beseech you, by the passion of Jesus Christ and by the merits of his Holy Mother and of all the saints, let us leave the body of this man without speaking further—for the angels will answer your question whenever you wish. After all, are we not liars? So why should you want to believe us? Please don't torture us anymore; have pity on us."

"Woe unto you, wretched spirits, who do not deserve to be heard," St. Dominic said, and kneeling down, he prayed to Our Lady: "Oh most worthy Mother of Wisdom, I am praying for the people assembled here who have already learned how to say the Angelic Salutation properly. Please, I beg of you, force your enemies to proclaim the whole truth and nothing but the truth about this, here and now, before the multitude."

St. Dominic had hardly finished this prayer when he saw the Blessed Virgin near at hand, surrounded by a multitude of angels. She struck the possessed man with a golden rod that she held and said: "Answer my servant Dominic at once." (Remember, the people neither saw nor heard Our Lady, but only St. Dominic.) Then the devils started screaming: "Oh you who are our enemy, our downfall and our destruction, why have you come from heaven just to torture us so grievously? O Advocate of sinners, you who snatch them from the very jaws of hell, you who are the very sure path to heaven, must we, in spite of ourselves, tell the whole truth and confess before everyone who it is the cause of our shame and our ruin? Oh woe unto us, princes of darkness: Then listen well, you Christians: the Mother of Jesus Christ is all-powerful and she can save her servants from falling into hell. She is the Sun which destroys the darkness of our wiles and subtlety. It is she who uncovers our hidden plots, breaks our snares, and makes our temptations useless and ineffectual.

"We have to say, however reluctantly, that not a single soul who has really persevered in her service has ever been damned with us; one single sigh that she offers to the Blessed Trinity is worth far more

than all the prayers, desires, and aspirations of all the saints.

"We fear her more than all the other saints in heaven together and we have no success with her faithful servants. Many Christians who call upon her when they are at the hour of death and who really ought to be damned according to our ordinary standards are saved by her intercession.

"Oh if only that Mary (it is thus in their fury that they called her) had not pitted her strength against ours and had not upset our plans, we should have conquered the Church and should have destroyed it long before this; and we would have seen to it that all the Orders in the Church fell into error and disorder.

"Now that we are forced to speak, we must also tell you this: nobody who perseveres in praying the Rosary will be damned, because she obtains for her servants the grace of true contrition for their sins and by means of this they obtain God's forgiveness and mercy."

Then St. Dominic had the people all say the Rosary very slowly and with great devotion, and a wonderful thing happened: at each *Hail Mary* that he and the people said together, a large group of devils issued forth from the wretched man's body under the guise of red-hot coals.

When the devils had all been expelled and the heretic was at last entirely free of them, Our Lady (who was still invisible) gave her blessing to the assembled company, and they were filled with joy because of this.

A large number of heretics were converted because of this miracle and joined the Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary.

Another true story recounted by St. Louis de Montfort had to do with the protection that is afforded by always faithfully having on one's person the weapon that is the rosary. We also see it used as a weapon of torture against evil spirits.

Fr. Jean Amat, of the Order of St. Dominic, was giving a series of Lenten sermons in the Kingdom of Aragon one year, when a young girl was brought to him who was possessed by the devil. After he had exorcised her several times without success, he put his rosary around her neck. Hardly had he done so than the girl began to scream and yell in a fearful way, shrieking: "Take them off! Take them off! These beads are torturing me!" At last the Father, filled with pity for the girl, took his rosary off her.

The very next night when Fr. Amat was in bed, the same devils who had possession of the girl came to him foaming with rage and tried to

seize him. But he had his rosary clasped in his hand and no effort of theirs could wrench it from him. He managed to beat them with it very well indeed and chased them away, crying out: “Holy Mary, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, come to my help!”

The next day when he went to the church and met the poor girl—still possessed—one of the devils within her started to laugh and said in a mocking voice: “Well Brother, if you had been without your rosary, we should have made short shrift of you!” Then the good father threw his rosary around the girl’s neck without more ado and said: “By the sacred name of Jesus and that of Mary his Holy Mother, and by the power of the Most Holy Rosary, I command you, evil spirits, to leave the body of this girl,” and they were immediately forced to obey and she was delivered from them.

Here is another narrative, from St. Louis regarding the efficacy of the rosary in expelling evil spirits. However, we should never view the rosary as a talisman or amulet. The rosary must always be connected with faith in the intercession of Mama Mary because of her great love for us.

Blessed Alan said that a man he knew of had desperately tried all kinds of devotions to rid himself of the evil spirit who possessed him, but without success. Finally he thought of wearing his rosary around his neck, which eased him considerably. He discovered that whenever he took it off the devil tormented him cruelly, so he resolved to wear it night and day. This drove the evil spirit away forever, because he could not bear such a terrible chain. Blessed Alan also testified that he had delivered a large number of people who were possessed by putting the rosary around their necks.

The next story has to do with a person who had made a pact with the devil through a written document.

In 1578 a woman in Anvers had given herself to the devil and had signed the contract with her own blood. Shortly afterwards she was stricken with sincere remorse and had an intense desire to make amends for this terrible deed. So she sought out a kind and wise confessor who advised her to go to Fr. Henry, one of the Fathers of the Dominican Friary who was Director of the Rosary Confraternity in that town, to ask him to enroll her in it and hear her confession.

Accordingly she went to ask for him but met, not Fr. Henry, but the devil disguised as a Dominican Father. The latter scolded her pitilessly

and said that she could never hope to receive Almighty God's grace again as long as she lived and that there was absolutely no way in which she could regain possession of her contract. This grieved her greatly but she did not quite lose hope of God's mercy and sought out Fr. Henry once more, only to find the devil the second time, and to meet with a second rebuff. She came back for the third time, and then at last, by Divine Providence, she found Fr. Henry in person—the priest whom she had been looking for—and he treated her with very great kindness, urging her to throw herself upon the mercy of Almighty God and make a good confession. He then received her into the Confraternity and told her to say the Rosary frequently.

One day while Fr. Henry was saying Mass for her, Our Lady forced the devil to give her back the contract which she had signed. In this way she was delivered from the devil by the authority of Mary and by her devotion to the Most Holy Rosary.

The final story from St. Louis de Montfort has to do with how the rosary converted a whole convent of lax nuns. Truly, the rosary is a great gift of God and Mama Mary to us. We must learn not only to have it with us always but to properly pray it daily with or without companions. I myself carry my rosary in my pocket wherever I go. Only in heaven will I know from how many dangers Mama Mary has saved me because of it.

A nobleman had several daughters and one of them entered in a lax monastery where the nuns were very proud and thought of nothing else but worldly pleasures. The nuns' confessor, on the other hand, was a zealous priest and had a great love for the Holy Rosary. Wishing to guide this nun into a better way of life, he ordered her to say the Rosary every day in honor of the Blessed Virgin while meditating on the life, passion, and glory of Jesus Christ.

She joyously undertook to say the Rosary and little by little she grew to have a repugnance for the wayward habit of her sisters in religion. She developed a love for silence and prayer and this in spite of the fact that the others despised and ridiculed her and called her a fanatic.

It was at this time that a holy priest, who was making the visitation of the convent, had a strange vision while he was making his meditation: he saw a nun in her room, rapt in prayer, kneeling in front of a Lady of breathless beauty who was surrounded by angels. The latter had flaming spears with which they repelled a crowd of devils who wanted to come in. These evil spirits then fled to the other nuns' rooms under the guise of vile animals.

By this vision the priest became aware of the lamentable state the monastery was in and he was so upset that he thought he might almost die of grief. He immediately sent for the young religious and exhorted her to persevere.

As he pondered on the value of the Rosary, he decided to try to reform the sisters by means of it. He bought a supply of beautiful rosaries and gave one to each nun, imploring them to say the Rosary every day, even going so far as to promise them that, if they would only say it faithfully, he would not try to force them to alter their lives. Wonderful and strange as it may seem, the nuns agreed to this pact and were glad to be given the rosaries and promised to say them.

Little by little they began to give up their empty and worldly pursuits, letting silence and recollection come into their lives. In less than a year they all asked that the monastery be reformed.

So the Holy Rosary worked more changes in their hearts than the priest could have worked by exhorting and commanding them.

Prayer

Behold at your feet, O Mary, my hope,
a poor sinner who has been so many times,
by his own fault, a slave of hell.
I know that by neglecting to have recourse to you,
I allowed myself
to be overcome by the devil.
If I had always remembered you and invoked you,
I would never have fallen.
O most loving Mother,
I trust that, with your help,
I have already escaped the clutches
of the devil
and that God has pardoned me.
But I tremble for the future,
lest I again become enchained.
I know that my enemies
have not given up the hope of returning
and conquering me again.
My queen and my refuge, help me!
Take me under your protection.
Do not let me become enslaved again.

I know you will help me
every time I call on you

and that ultimately
you will make me victorious.
But there is one thought that frightens me:
that in the hour of temptation
I shall forget you and fail to call on you.
And that is why today
I seek and beg the grace
of ever remembering to call on you,
especially in times of temptation.
Make me invoke you often with these words:
“Mary, help me! Mary, help me!”

Finally, when the day of my last combat dawns,
when I am about to die, then,
O Mary, help me more than ever.
Make me call upon you frequently,
so that I may die with your most sweet name,
and that of your Son Jesus, on my lips,
and that I may come to bless
and praise you and never leave you
for all eternity in heaven.
Amen.

PART II

THE SAINTS

CHAPTER V

The Great Battle of the Church Begins

During the early years of the Church which Christ established, the devil did his utmost to block the growth of the Body of Christ in the world. Paganism which was the religion of the entire Roman Empire at that time was the instrument Satan used to try and destroy the Christian faith. Paganism, also called animism, is a belief system which includes the belief in the existence of many gods and that through occult/esoteric practices, one may be able to manipulate these gods for the benefit of man. It is an amoral system, meaning that there is no need for man to live a virtuous life, what matters is knowing and performing perfectly the prescribed rites and rituals in order to obtain the benefits sought after. Here, man enters into a sort of barter system with the gods. He performs the necessary worship and appeasement and the gods reciprocate through responding to his requests. Paganism is a belief system that pervaded both the Old Testament and the New Testament world.

Before we proceed further, it must be noted that the gods of Rome were adaptations of the Greek gods. The gods of the Greeks were also adaptations of the Egyptian gods. It must be remembered that these so-called gods of Egypt tried unsuccessfully to oppose Yahweh's plan for his chosen people, the Israelites. We read in the Old Testament that the Egyptian Pharaoh was obstinate even after witnessing the miracles God wrought through Moses because his magicians and sorcerers, using occultism/esotericism, mimicked the miracles of Yahweh. It was only after Pharaoh saw that his gods could not protect his people and his land from the Angel of Death who took the life of all the firstborn in Egypt, that he relented and allowed the Israelites to depart and go to the Promised Land. Pharaoh discovered firsthand the ineptness of his gods versus the God of the Israelites. Reading the Old Testament carefully,

one would discover that it is filled with conflicts and sometimes even bloody combats between the people of Israel, especially the prophets of Yahweh, and the nations, and their false prophets immersed in paganism. An example of one of the pagan deities the Israelites had to deal with was Beelzebub (Prince Baal), a name we will encounter in the New Testament; he was the chief pagan god of Canaan. In the Old Testament we read of the life-and-death encounter between the prophet Elijah and the 450 false prophets of Baal.[6]

Now Yahweh had to be strict on the chosen people of Israel, for they were easily contaminated and swayed by the pagan nations (their belief system and occult/esoteric practices) around them.

"When you come into the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you, you shall not learn to imitate the abominations of the peoples there. Let there not be found among you anyone who immolates his son or daughter in the fire, nor a fortune-teller, soothsayer, charmer, diviner, or caster of spells, nor one who consults ghosts and spirits or seeks oracles from the dead. Anyone who does such things is an abomination to the Lord, and because of such abominations the Lord, your God, is driving these nations out of your way" (Dt 18:9-12).

"Do not go to mediums or consult fortune-tellers, for you will be defiled by them. I, the Lord, am your God" (Lv 19: 31).

"Should anyone turn to mediums and fortune-tellers and follow their wanton ways, I will turn against such a one and cut him off from his people" (Lv 20:6).

Each time the Israelites would start to worship other gods and practice their occult rites and rituals, Yahweh would take away his protection over them and they would then be easily conquered by a foreign nation.

"They worshiped their idols and were ensnared by them. They sacrificed to the gods their own sons and daughters, shedding innocent blood, the blood of their own sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, desecrating the land with bloodshed. They defiled themselves by their actions, became adulterers by their conduct. So the Lord grew angry with his people, abhorred his own heritage. He handed them over to the nations, and their adversaries ruled them. Their enemies

oppressed them, kept them under subjection" (Psalm 106:36-42).

But God was forever faithful to his covenant with his chosen people and would always call them back, especially through the prophets. Israel had some difficulty remaining faithful to Yahweh due to the fact that, although the people believed in Yahweh and his power, they still clung somewhat to the erroneous belief that there were other gods besides him. And these other gods could be tapped for power and other benefits through worship and occult practices. Polytheism was a constant and very dangerous temptation for Israel hence the First Commandment of God had to do with the reality that there is only one God and that all the other so-called "gods" were false. We see numerous accounts in the Old Testament of how easily the Israelites would return to polytheism; for example, they had just left Egypt and witnessed firsthand the power of Yahweh when he saved them from the Egyptian army during the crossing of the Red Sea. They were waiting for Moses to return from Mt. Sinai and when he had not returned for a number of days, they easily took up to worshipping one of the gods of the Egyptians which was in the form of a calf.

Going back to the early Christian era, the Roman gods, who were the later adaptations of the gods of the Egyptians, had power and this was used by the Roman Empire for utilitarian purposes, for winning wars, for prosperity, for fertility, for good weather, and the like.

For the average Roman, every aspect of life was governed by thousands of minor deities. Death, puberty, travel, moving into a new home, and all other matters were each covered by their own rites.[7]

The chief characteristic of Roman public religion was utilitarianism. The Romans were interested in what works, and this was defined as that which produced military victories, public safety, and economic advantages. Since Rome was usually successful in its endeavors, the people and the leaders thought that this was due to their religious practices and thus should be punctiliously observed.[8]

Like most primitive religions, the earliest pagan religions were born out of a desire to control the forces of nature. The Romans believed that all the processes of the world were controlled by spiritual forces. Some people today might find this thesis acceptable, but the Romans differed from us in that they believed each process had its own spirit that controlled it. Thus, there was not only an agricultural god, but a spirit in charge of plowing, a separate spirit devoted to planting, and a third spirit devoted to the harvest. Each spirit had to be placated in the way it preferred, at the proper time of the year, with the proper ceremony. Failure to perform each rite properly could lead to disaster, not only for individuals but for the entire community.[9]

Adoration, sacrifice, and appeasement of the gods of Rome were

therefore very important in the life of the empire. Later on in Church history, after the fall of the Roman Empire, Greco-Roman paganism would again manifest itself in a very evident manner in Western witchcraft. A historical analysis on the development of witchcraft, magic, and sorcery will show how occult/esoteric practices found in Egyptian paganism survived through the centuries in one form or another until our present age.

Now it must be noted that the Romans had very many gods because they not only adapted the gods of the Greeks, but they also appropriated all the gods of the pagan nations they conquered.

It was considered advantageous for Rome to "capture" the gods of other people and, by assiduous worship, co-opt these gods and make them work for Rome rather than their native people. In this way Minerva became a Roman goddess; her statue was captured from the Falernians in 241 BC and installed in her own temple in Rome; she was thought no less loyal to Rome for having been captured in war.[10]

Every victory of the invincible Roman army over a foreign nation brought new gods to their already large number of gods. The Romans were a practical people and used any and all gods that would gain them more benefits in their undertakings. But the true identity of these gods, who they really were, remained hidden. Hidden, that is, until the coming of the Christians. It was with the coming of Christ and his Body, the Church, that the true identity of these so-called "gods" was finally clearly revealed to the nations. They were seen to be the *fallen angels* or *demons*. That is one of the main reasons why those who converted from Greco-Roman paganism had to be exorcised many times during the catechumenate before they were even baptized; these new converts had to be cleansed from demonic occult contamination. Of course, the Israelites knew that the pagan gods were fallen angels, but it was not a reality that was explicitly announced to pagans.

"The pagan marvels were the work of demons, in the arrogance of their foul pride which made them ambitious to be the gods of the pagans" (St. Augustine).

"(Man) gave his fidelity to unclean spirits he thought would help him to live a life of sensual pleasure and to acquire material goods. In this way, idolatry and other sins arose in the human race" (St. Thomas Aquinas).

The first Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians states: *"So what am I saying? That meat sacrificed to idols is anything? Or that an idol is anything? No, I mean that what they sacrifice, [they sacrifice] to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to become participants with demons"* (10:19-20). And Tertullian (second century), Father of Latin Theology,

when speaking about these gods of paganism, states very clearly that "those whom you regarded as gods are not visible to you as demons." Also St. Justin the Martyr (second century), one of the first Christian theologians and the Apologist Father of the Church, says that "to sacrifice to an idol is not only an act of weakness, but an act of adoration of the devil, a blasphemy against Christ, an act deserving damnation." We must always keep in mind that the devil is the prince of this world (Jn 12:31) who displays his power in the darkness of idolatry (Acts 26:18; Col 1:13).

St. Augustine in his book, *City of God,* tells us that the "spirits are deceivers, not by nature, but by malice. They make themselves gods and souls of the departed, but they do not make themselves devils, for they really are so." While in his great work, the *Summa Theologica*, St. Thomas Aquinas teaches us that the fundamental cause for the worship of idols "must be sought in the devils, who cause men to adore them under the form of idols, therein working certain things which excited their wonder and admiration."

More in our own times, we read in the classic book *The Devil: Does He Exist and What Does He Do?* that *"profane histories… are all filled with prodigies wrought by the gods of Paganism, who were no other than the devils."* [11] Adding to this, Msgr. Cristiani in his work, *Evidence of Satan in the Modern World*, makes this assertion: *"What is undeniable is that to the Jews and still more to the Christians, all pagan deities could be none other than devils."*[12]

So with the coming of Christ, the Light of the world, the devil and his demons could no longer remain hidden in the darkness of idolatry. These fallen angels were all around and active during the era of the Roman Empire and yet could not really be touched and dislodged until the coming of Christ. With the definitive coming of the reign of God in Christ, the strongholds of Satan in pagan Rome could no longer remain hidden and untouched.

Going back to the time of Jesus, the power of the Kingdom of God was first and foremost manifested among the Jews; we therefore see Jesus performing so many exorcisms among the chosen people of Yahweh. The countless number of exorcisms of Jesus and all done in his own name was, during those times, unimaginable and unheard of. The evil spirits hidden (like in sicknesses) and entrenched among the chosen people were brought to the Light of Christ and summarily expelled. Jesus, as St. John tells us, came to destroy the works of Satan.

Jesus gave this same power, his own authority, to his followers so that they may continue in time his ministry of preaching, healing, and exorcism. He gave to them the authority and the power of God to destroy the strongholds that the devil had set up in the world and to

spread the Kingdom of the one true God. The structures and systems that the devil had set up for centuries in the world were now vulnerable to attack and destruction.

He appointed twelve [whom he also named apostles] that they might be with him and he might send them forth to preach and to have authority to drive out demons (Mk 3:14-15).

Then he summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness (Mt 10:1).

The seventy[-two] returned rejoicing, and said, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us because of your name" (Lk 10:17).

Now we arrive at the conflict between the People of the New Covenant (the Church) wrought by Christ and the paganism that was existing outside the borders of Israel. Due to the intense and bloody persecutions (for example, the stoning of St. Stephen) of the Christians in Jerusalem by many of the Jewish leaders and their followers, there started the great dispersion of the Christians beyond the borders of Palestine to the other parts of the Roman Empire. What was the religious situation in the empire during this time of the great dispersion?

By the time of Augustus, nearly every city in the empire had temples to all the major Greco-Roman gods. This circumstance came about because of a curious melange of factors:

1. *The Greeks had begun the process of correlating local gods long before the Romans came onto the scene. Thus, Ammon of Egypt, Baal of Syria, and a host of other local gods were correlated with Zeus. Greeks governed the eastern Mediterranean from the time of Alexander until the Romans came to power, and they used their authority to promote Greek religion and culture.*
2. *The Romans deliberately continued the policies of the Hellenistic rulers. Every city in the empire either had Roman temples built, or temples of local gods rededicated to Roman gods.*
3. *The spirit of the age favored religious syncretism. The Greek and Roman religious policy succeeded because the local people, with one notable exception, were receptive to the idea of religious universalism and did not care if their local god was called Baal or Zeus or Jupiter, as long as the deity was worshipped properly.*[13]

Now the Gospel spread quickly like wildfire into the Pagan Empire of Rome. Conversions and baptisms were done in huge numbers. If one studied the historical data on the reasons why Christianity quickly spread throughout the empire, he would see that one of the main reasons was due to the exorcisms done by the Christians. Christians were exorcising evil spirits left and right when the occult/esoteric practitioners of pagan Rome had difficulty dealing with such spirits. Many pagans saw the power of the Christian God and therefore believed in the truth of the Faith.

A prominent modern Church historian lists six factors that made Christianity attractive to people: (1) charity offered without expectation of return or profit, (2) fellowship offered to all social levels, (3) Christian steadfastness in the face of persecution, (4) the high moral standards of the Christians, (5) Christians' assurance of victory over demons (this one was much more important than we might think), and (6) the sacraments, which conveyed the promise of salvation.[14]

St. Justin the Martyr clearly writes: "Every demon is controlled, defeated, and subdued in the name of the Son of God… but none of the demons will submit when you command him in the name of any king, judge, prophet, or patriarch." In another place, the saint reiterates that possessed persons were liberated by the Christians "even when they could not be cured by all the other exorcists, and exploiters of incantations and drugs." While another great writer of antiquity, Origen, tells us about how Christians expel demons: "And this, we may observe, they do without the use of any curious arts of magic incantations, but merely by prayer and simple adjurations which the plainest person can use. Because for the most part it is unlettered persons who perform this work; thus making manifest the grace which is in the word of Christ and the despicable weakness of demons, which, in order to be overcome and driven out of the bodies and souls of men, do not require the power of wisdom of those who are mighty in argument and most learned in matters of faith."

But as the apostles and disciples of Christ were spreading the Faith and destroying the false religion of paganism among the people of the Roman Empire, the gods of Rome came out in an all-out war, using men and circumstances to destroy the Church of the true and only one God.

The Greek philosopher Hierocles warned Diocletian that Christianity is not "like the cult of Mithras. The followers of Mithras never spoke against the gods. But the Christians consider our gods to be demons, unholy spirits, and claim that the only Hebrew rebel they worship is the one true god." The singularity of Christian belief made the Christians easy targets, and their well-organized episcopal hierarchy made it easy to find their leaders. All that was necessary was for suspicion to be ignited by evidence of criminal intent,

or for an augury of the gods to accuse the Christians of bringing ill favor on Rome. Such an augury came from Apollo in the winter of 302. The temple oracle warned that its prophetic powers had been compromised by the presence of the Christians, and the implication was that something must be done against the usurpers to restore the pagan religion.[15]

We see here that the gods of Rome, communicating through their mediums, started to blame the weakening of their powers to the growing number of Christians.

The conflict between the Romans and the Christians was inevitable. The Roman objections to Christianity can be summarized as follows.

The Romans were deeply offended by the Christians' unwillingness to worship the pagan gods. Broadly speaking, people in the Greco-Roman world thought that the growth of crops, the prevention of illness, and military success all depended on the proper worship of the correct gods. The Christians refused to participate in these ceremonies. Worse, from the Roman perspective, they encouraged others to do the same. The Roman attitude toward worshipping the gods was, "Why take a chance?" and they could not understand or tolerate the Christians' refusal to get along. To put the matter as simply as possible, the Christians, from the Roman point of view, by their refusal to worship gods, were responsible for natural disasters. Tertullian complained: "If the Tiber rises as high as the city walls, if the Nile does not send its waters up over the fields, if the heavens give no rain, if there is an earthquake, if there is famine or pestilence, straightaway the cry is, 'Away with the Christians to the lions!' "[16]

Such were the new challenges confronting Rome, challenges that fed Roman fears of losing favor with the gods who had kept Roman arms victorious and subdued the Mediterranean world to the Pax Romana.[17]

This epoch in the history of the Church became known as the time of the martyrs, the heroes of God, who desired torture and death than bowing down and adoring the fallen angels disguising themselves as gods. This era became one of the bloodiest and also most heroic in Church history. It must be remembered that in Rome, the worship of one conquered nation's gods was tolerated as long as the citizens also adored the other gods, especially the major gods of Rome.

The great tragedy of the late Roman Empire, then, is this: it had within it a body of men and women who wanted to be good citizens but were prevented by the injustice of Roman law. The Romans, for their part, felt they could not budge, lest the state fall apart. So the Christians waited, and prayed, and suffered, hoping for a ruler with the wisdom and foresight to use, rather than torture them. Such an emperor was three hundred years in coming.[18]

The Romans primarily used the tried-and-true method of destroying the leadership of any movement they opposed. The bishops, presbyters, and deacons were usually their primary targets.[19]

Eusebius records a vast catalog of torture that was inflicted on Christians, whether men or women. "Some were scraped, racked, mercilessly flogged, subjected to countless other torments too terrible to describe in endless variety, and finally given to the flames; some were submerged in the sea; others cheerfully stretched out their necks to the headsman's axe; some died under torture; others were starved to death; others again were crucified, some as criminals usually are, some with still greater cruelty nailed the other way up, head down, and kept alive until starved to death on the very cross." This is but a small part of Eusebius' list of the means of torture and execution used by the state against the Christians. He adds, "I was in these places, and saw many of the executions for myself. Some of the victims suffered death by beheading, others punishment by fire. So many were killed in a single day that the axe, blunted and worn out by the slaughter was broken in pieces, while the exhausted executioners had to be periodically relieved. All the time I observed a most wonderful eagerness and a truly divine power and enthusiasm in those who had put their trust in the Christ of God.[20]

From 64 to 313, Christianity was, formally and officially, illegal in the empire, and punishment for being a Christian was death: beheading for citizens, and various forms of cruel and unusual means for non-citizens.[21]

Just like with Christ, when the devil tempted Christ in a subtle manner (the temptations in the desert) and failed, he came out in a more direct and furious manner to destroy the mission of Jesus through the crucifixion. When the early Christians, the only people in the Roman Empire who adored only one God, refused to even offer incense to the gods of Rome, the devil and his demons posing as the plethora of Roman gods came out with all their fury and evilness to destroy the Christians. St. Cyprian of Carthage states, "And let us arm our right hand with the sword of the spirit so that it may courageously refuse the daily [pagan] sacrifices, and, remembering the Eucharist, let the hand that took hold of the body of the Lord embrace the Lord himself, and so gain from the Lord the future prize of a heavenly crown."

There is only one God and he is the Father of Jesus and also their Father since they had become adopted sons through Christ.

All pagan converts to Catholicism also destroyed all their occult/ esoteric paraphernalia connected with their former beliefs. St. Cyril of Jerusalem warns the converts: "The watching of birds, divination, omens, or amulets, or charms written on leaves, sorceries, or other evil arts, and all such things, are services of the devil; therefore shun them. For if after renouncing Satan and associating thyself with Christ, you fall under their influence, you shall find the tyrant more bitter; perchance, because he treated you of old as his own, and relieved you from his hard bondage, but has now been greatly exasperated, by you; so you will be bereaved of Christ, and have experience of the other."

“Many of those who had become believers came forward and openly acknowledged their former practices. Moreover, a large number of those who had practiced magic collected their books and burned them in public” (Acts 19:18-19).

But the more the kingdom of darkness tried to destroy the Kingdom of Light, the more the reverse happened. The intense persecution, torture, and murder of thousands and thousands of Catholics did nothing to stop the ever growing power of the Kingdom of God. Christ’s victory over the devil was clearly manifested in that not only did the Church survive the centuries of persecution, it was, after a few centuries, accepted by the Roman Empire as the official religion of the state.

From the time that Catholicism became the state religion in the fourth century, the image of a Christian hero moved from the image of a martyr who died for the Faith to the image of hermit who went out to the desert, like Christ, to combat the devil; here we see the beginnings of the birth of the religious life: hermits, monks, nuns, sisters and brothers. From this time onward, many Christians sought to go alone or later in a closed community to the desert (seen to be the devil’s territory) in order to concentrate on God alone in solitude and to do battle with the fallen angels. One sought out the devil in his lair; defeating him for the greater glory of God by overcoming him not only in his temptations but also in his more extraordinary attacks of demonic oppression. St. Antony of the Desert is a prime example of this new way of life, that emerged as a stable vocation in the Church. The saints of this era also sought to vanquish totally the remnants of the devil’s strongholds in the empire; the vestiges of paganism and animism. A few of the great personalities of this era of Church history and their heroic combats with the gods and followers of paganism will be dealt with in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER VI

The Saints of the Early Church and the Devil —Paganism/Animism

The Church has always taught that paganism/animism (which was also the belief system of our Filipino ancestors) goes directly against the First Commandment. We see this clearly in the following accounts of the early Christian saints when the Church was completing its evangelization of the Roman Empire. The saints knew the gods of the pagans were no other than the fallen angels trying to deceive man that they were gods so that worship would be accorded to them. With the coming of Christianity, the saints in the beginning suffered martyrdom rather than offer sacrifice to these so-called "gods of Rome" since they knew for certain that they would be worshipping the fallen angels (idolatry). We see an example of the connection between paganism and the fallen angels in the life of St. Anthony of the Desert.

> "Wallowing there in the filthy mire, they (demons) introduced the wicked worship of paganism; now they are tortured by envy of us and never cease to devise every possible evil scheme to prevent us from taking over the top positions they once held" (*Life of St. Anthony* by St. Athanasius).

> "That is why the miserable pagans, unaware of the Lord's prohibition, mistakenly believed that the demons were gods. But the Lord did not allow the Christian peoples to be ensnared in these deceptions, he who boldly repelled the devil in the Gospel when the devil claimed dominion over everything" (*Life of St. Anthony* by St. Athanasius).

Pagans worshipped their idols in fear, for they knew firsthand that these gods had some form of preternatural power and were capricious in nature. They adored these gods also due to the fact that through them, they could attain certain magical benefits and powers for use in daily life. The specialists who normally communicated and had better access to these fallen angels were the occult practitioners: wizards, witches, faith healers, sorcerers, shamans, magicians, priestesses, diviners, necromancers, fortune-tellers, and the like. And where these fallen angels were seen to dwell, shrines and temples were erected. In the phrase below, we see how shrines were used for occult purposes and that one of these purposes was the giving of oracles (divination/fortune-telling).

> "This was how paganism started: by means of these prophets' tricks, the oracles spoken by the demons at the shrines used once to be believed. But at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ they were silenced and became speechless and lost those they held captive" (*Life of St. Anthony* by St. Athanasius).

In the following teaching, the saint not only goes against the pagan worship of the fallen angels in nature (also popularly called as elementals) but also against any form of worship to the objects of nature. Today, there is a revival (New Age Movement) of the worship of the sun, the moon, mountains, trees, and other objects of nature. This is also idolatry which goes against the First Commandment.

> "But after this bold attempt at a cover-up, you disregard the Creator and acknowledge the created beings, not God. But if the beauty of the elements has drawn you to worship them, you should have limited yourselves to admiring, not worshipping, them, for otherwise the veneration of created things might imply an insult to the Creator. For according to the kind of distorted logic you use, the honor due to the architect is transferred to the building, and the doctor's skill is attributed to the cures, and the rewards and praises due to all craftsmen are bestowed instead on the products themselves" (*Life of St. Anthony* by St. Athanasius).

In the following account, we see in the life of St. Hilarion how demons inhabit desolate places in nature and the corresponding shrines and temples built by pagans to worship, and therefore acquire access to the powers of these demons. And, of course, once a temple/shrine is erected and occult activities begin, more and more fallen angels would be

attracted to the place. They have an insatiable need to be adored like God.

> “After a long search, Hesychius found a place twelve miles from the sea and led Hilarion into the remote and harsh mountains to a place which could hardly be reached even on hands and knees. On entering, Hilarion saw before him a remote and terrifying place. For although it was surrounded on all sides by trees and there was also water flowing down from the brow of the hill, a most delightful garden and many fruit trees (the fruit of which he never picked for his food), yet there were also nearby the ruins of a very ancient temple from which the sound of an enormous number of demons (as he himself related and his disciples still testify) could be heard night and day. You might have imagined that there was an army there! It pleased Hilarion greatly that he would have his adversaries nearby, and so he remained there for five years. He was comforted by the fact that Hesychius often came to visit him during this time, at what was not the final period of his life, because no one—or only the occasional person—was able, or dared, to climb up to see him, owing to the fact that the place was in such a difficult and rugged location and on account of the large number of ghosts there (as rumor had it)” (*Life of St. Hilarion* by St. Jerome).

ST. HILARION
(c. 291-371)

To him was due the credit of introducing into Palestine and Syria the eremitic life as it was led in the Egyptian deserts. He became a hermit near Majuma, Palestine, practiced the greatest austerities and became known for his miracles and exorcisms.

In the next account, we see how the early Christian saints perceived and dealt with pagan shrines and temples. Here we see St. Martin of Tours not only destroying a pagan temple but also a tree that was inhabited by demons. Today, New Agers have all kinds of occult activities that try to acquire "power" or "energy" from trees and other objects of nature, not knowing that they are dealing with the fallen angels attached to these objects. We have to remember that in our age, evil spirits gain more access to man's interior faculties in the form of so-called "energies" of the universe that an initiate can tap into. On the other hand, in Philippine society, especially in the provinces, Filipinos still appease and worship the fallen angels (elementals) in the trees, mountains, and other objects of nature.

"Again, when he had destroyed a very ancient temple in a certain village and had undertaken to chop down a pine tree standing beside the shrine, the priest of the temple, together with a whole crowd of pagans, began to put resistance. And although these people had at the Lord's command done nothing while the temple was being knocked down, they refused to allow the tree to be cut down. Martin was at pains to make it clear to them that there was nothing sacred about a tree stump; they should rather follow God, whose servant he was; in fact, they ought to chop down that tree because it was consecrated to a demon. Then one of them, who was bolder than the rest, said, "If you have any faith in your God whom you claim to worship, we will cut down this tree ourselves and you must catch it as it falls. If your Lord is with you, as you claim, you will escape injury." Then Martin promised that he would do so, for his confidence in the Lord made him fearless. At this point, the whole crowd of pagans agreed to these terms, and they really assented to the loss of their tree, as long as it managed to crush the enemy of their rites as it fell. And so, when the pine tree began to lean on to one side so that there was no doubt as to which way it would fall when it was cut down, Martin was tied up and placed, as the peasants wished, in the spot where everyone was convinced the tree would fall. Then they began to chop at the pine with great joy and excitement. A crowd of amazed onlookers stood at a distance. And then the pine was gradually starting to sway to and fro and, on the point of falling, it threatened its own destruction. Standing some way away the monks grew pale: terrified by the danger

which was then close at hand, they had lost all hope and confidence and were then only awaiting Martin's death. But he trusted in the Lord and waited without fear. The pine gave a crashing noise as it fell and Martin raised his hand to meet it as it was falling, as it came crashing down on top of him, and he made the sign of salvation to block the tree's path. As a result the tree fell in a different place (you would have thought it had been pushed back by some kind of whirlwind) so that it came close to crushing the country folk who had been standing in a safe place. Then shouts rose to the skies, for the pagans were shocked by the miracle, while the monks wept for joy and the name of Christ was proclaimed by all of them together. It was generally agreed that on that day salvation came to the region. For there was hardly anyone in that huge crowd of pagans who did not ask for the laying on of hands and who did not believe in the Lord Jesus, abandoning the error of impiety. It is true that before Martin came there were only a few, or rather, there was hardly anyone in those regions who had received the name of Christ, but by means of his miracles and his example, the name of Christ grew so strong that there was no longer any place in that area which was not full of churches or monasteries filled with people. For in those places where he had destroyed the pagan shrines, he immediately built either churches or monasteries" (*Life of St. Martin of Tours* by Sulpicius Severus).

In the next account, we see again St. Martin of Tours zealously destroying other pagan shrines and God accompanying him with miracles as well as protecting him as he went about evangelizing the pagans regarding the truth that there was only one God and that he detested paganism/animism.

"In another village, called Leprosus, Martin wanted to knock down a temple which had been richly ornamented by the pagan superstition, but he was so strongly resisted by a crowd of pagans that he was driven back, not without injury. Consequently, he withdrew to the neighboring area, where he spent three days fasting and praying, clothed in sackcloth and ashes. He prayed to the Lord for divine power to destroy that temple since human hands could not demolish it. Then suddenly two angels, armed with spears and shields, appeared to him like heavenly soldiers, saying that they were sent by the Lord to disperse the crowds of peasants and to bring assistance to Martin to prevent anyone resisting him while the temple was being demolished. The angels told him to go back and finish off faithfully the task he had begun. So he went back to the village and as the pagan crowds looked

on in silence, he completely demolished the temple belonging to the false religion and reduced all the altars and statues to dust. Seeing this, the villagers realized that the divine will had rendered them speechless and panic-stricken to stop them resisting the bishop, and as a result almost all of them converted to the Lord Jesus: they shouted out in public, confessing that they should worship Martin's God and neglect the idols that were unable to help them.

"I shall also relate what happened in a village of the Aedui. While Martin was destroying another temple, a furious crowd of pagan villagers attacked him. When one of them, who was braver than the others, drew his sword and aimed a blow at him, Martin threw back his cloak and offered his bare neck to the man who was on the point of hitting him. The pagan did not hesitate to strike but when he raised his right arm higher, he fell backwards. Overwhelmed by fear of the divine, he begged for mercy. That story is not unlike the following one: when someone wanted to stab Martin with a knife while he was destroying some idols, the weapon was knocked from the man's hands as he struck the blow, and disappeared. More often, however, when the country people tried to prevent him from destroying their shrines, he would restrain the minds of these pagans by means of his holy teaching in such a way that when the light of truth was revealed to them, they would destroy their own temple themselves" (*Life of St. Martin of Tours* by Sulpicius Severus).

Below, we see clearly that the Greco-Roman "gods" were actually the fallen angels.

"The devil appeared to Martin in the most diverse forms in his attempts to trick the holy man by means of a thousand harmful devices. Sometimes he appeared transformed into the person of Jupiter, sometimes that of Mercury, and often even of Venus and Minerva; Martin, always unafraid, protected himself against him by making the sign of the cross and with the help of prayer. Often, one could hear abuse hurled at him by the throng of demons using foul language, but Martin knew that all these things were deceptive and an illusion, and was therefore unmoved by their taunts" (*Life of St. Martin of Tours* by Sulpicius Severus).

In the next account, we see St. Benedict of Nursia (whose medal is well-known to exorcists) also destroying all pagan shrines and temples and the resulting reaction of the devil.

"When the saint moved, he changed his place but not his enemy. For after this the battles he endured were all the harder because he found himself fighting openly against the master of evil in person. The fortification known as Casinum is situated on the side of a high mountain which holds Casinum in a broad pocket and then stretches its summit, as it were, towards the sky: the distance from the fortification to the summit is three miles. There was a very old shrine there where Apollo was worshipped by the foolish country folk in accordance with ancient pagan practice. Around the shrine a grove of trees had grown up, also consecrated to the demons, and here, even at this time, large numbers of pagans in their madness used to expend great effort on their sacrilegious sacrifices.

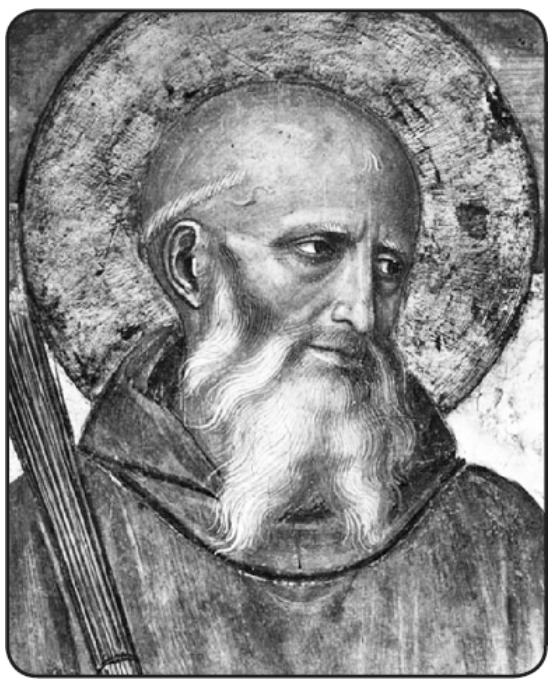
"When the man of God arrived there, he smashed the statue, overturned the altar, and cut down the grove. In the temple of Apollo itself he built a shrine to St. Martin and where the altar of Apollo had stood he built a shrine to St. John, and by preaching ceaselessly he called to the faith all those living in the vicinity.

"But the old enemy could not endure this in silence and so he appeared before the eyes of the abbot, not secretly or in a dream but in a clear vision. With loud cries he complained that he was being attacked: even the brothers could hear his words although they were utterly unable to see his shape. As the venerable abbot reported to his disciples, this old enemy appeared to his bodily eyes in a most hideous shape, all on fire, looking as if he were launching a ferocious assault on Benedict, his mouth and eyes shooting flames. Everyone could hear what he was saying. First he called Benedict by name, and when the man of God made no reply, he immediately started to abuse him. When he shouted "Benedict, Benedict," and saw that Benedict would not answer, he then added, "Cursed, not blessed! What have you got to do with me? Why are you persecuting me?"

"But now we must expect new attacks by the old enemy on the servant of God. The devil, wishing to wage war against Benedict, against his will provided him with opportunities for victory" (*Life of St. Benedict* by St. Gregory the Great).

In our office (Archdiocese of Manila Office of Exorcism) we have cases (mentioned in the first volume) of religious sisters being extraordinarily attacked (oppression) by the devil when they are about to make their vows; here, we see the devil attached yet hiding from the person. The devil would always try to remain hidden and not "rock the boat" so he is never confronted nor is the person awakened to the need to destroy the demonic stronghold in her life which can partially block God's blessings. But when the person, for example, a sister, is about to do

something that is repugnant to him, like offering herself entirely to God, the devil comes out in the open to prevent it. Then and only then is the person made aware of the demonic bondage. The above-mentioned sisters had some form of occult contamination due to frequenting faith healers and other occult practitioners when they were younger which allowed the evil spirits to attach to them unknowingly. Those involved deeply in the occult do not realize the demonic bondage that they are in until they are either so deep into it already that the devil can manifest himself without fear of being easily dislodged or when the occultist tries to leave behind the occult, he is now suddenly buffeted by oppression, obsession, and even possession since the devil would now have to come out in the open to prevent him from leaving.



ST. BENEDICT
(c. 480-547)

Founder of Western monasticism. His main achievement is his "Rule," containing precepts for his monks which became one of the most influential religious rules in Western Christendom.

The last account of this chapter has to do with the monks of St. Benedict seeking the help of the saint. Here we see how occult objects such as idol figurines, amulets, talismans, and the like have evil spirits attached to them and that they can cause problems within the vicinity and with those who come into contact with them.

“One day as the brothers were building rooms at the monastery, they found a stone lying in the middle which they decided to use for their building. When two or three of the monks found it impossible to move it, more of them came to help but the stone remained immovable, as if it were rooted to the ground. It was obvious, then, that the old enemy was sitting on it in person, seeing that the hands of such strong men were unable to move it. Faced with this difficulty, they sent a message to the man of God, asking him to come and drive the enemy away by means of prayer, so that they could lift the stone. Benedict came at once and when he had said a prayer and given a blessing, the stone was lifted so quickly that it was as if it had never been weighted down.

“Then the man of God decided that they should dig the soil at that spot. On digging down quite deep, the brothers discovered a bronze idol there. They threw it into the kitchen for the time being: at once fire appeared to shoot out and it seemed to all the monks that the whole kitchen building would burn down.

“As they attempted desperately to put the fire out by throwing water on it, the man of the Lord arrived, alerted by all the noise. He realized that this fire existed in the eyes of the brothers but not in his own. He immediately bowed his head in prayer and restored the sight of those brothers whom he found to be deceived by the imaginary fire, so that they could perceive that the kitchen building was standing intact, instead of seeing the flames which were an illusion created by the old enemy” (*Life of St. Benedict* by St. Gregory the Great).

CHAPTER VII

The Saints of the Early Church and the Devil —Extraordinary Attack

The following story in the life of St. Hilarion highlights the use of occult paraphernalia to bring about a "love curse" (*gayuma*). It is important to note that this type of curse can cause mental illness in the victim; this is a truth that I have encountered in my ministry. The victim falls into a trance-like hypnotic state and the mind is vulnerable at this point. It is important to remember that if one is in the state of grace and has a real intimacy with God, no curse can be effective against the person. The demons that are sent through the curse flee when they see that a Christian is protected by God. I know of cases wherein curses sent against people were returned to the sender with dire consequences because the intended victim was close to God. Fr. Fortea, the well-known Spanish, exorcist, tells us, *"The first thing that has to be said is that whoever does the curse—as well as the person who may have asked for the curse to be done—will be the first ones affected by the demonic. Without a doubt, they will suffer some type of demonic influence, possession, or sickness. The evil they wish on another will come back to them. A demon is never invoked in vain."*[22]

In the account below, the victim was vulnerable to the curse due to her being spiritually weak, hence we see the saint reprimanding her afterwards.

> "A young man from the same port of Gaza was dying of love for a virgin of God who lived next door. Frequent touching, jokes, nods, whistles, and other things of this kind which usually led to the loss of virginity, had brought him no success so he went all the way to

Memphis; he intended to confess his lovesick state and return to the virgin armed with magic devices. After a year spent learning from the priests of Aesculapius about how to destroy souls, not to cure them, he came back confident of the violation he had already anticipated in his imagination. Beneath the threshold of the girl's house he buried some magic spells and strange figures engraved on sheets of bronze from Cyprus. At once the virgin started to rave, and casting off the veil from her head, she tore her hair, gnashed her teeth, and called out the young man's name. The power of her love had turned to madness. So she was taken by her parents to Hilarion's monastery and entrusted her to the old man. At once the demon began to scream and shout out, "I was the victim of violence! I was abducted against my will! How expertly I used to delude the people of Memphis with my dreams! What tortures, what torments I suffer! You force me to depart but I am tied up, imprisoned beneath the threshold. I cannot depart unless the young man who is holding me lets go." Then the old man said, "Your strength must indeed be great, if you are held down by a string and a metal plate! Tell me, how did you dare to enter a girl dedicated to God?" "I wanted to protect her virginity." "You wanted to protect it, you who betray chastity? Why did you not rather enter the one who sent you?" "Why should I enter someone who was possessed by my colleague, the demon of passion?" The saint refused to give the order to look for the young man or the magic charms until he had exorcised the virgin, for he did not want it to look as if the demon had departed once it was released from the spells or that he himself had taken the demon's words seriously. For he firmly declared that demons are deceitful and cunning at pretense. Instead, once he had cured the virgin he scolded her, asking why she had behaved in such a way as to allow the demon to enter her" (*Life of St. Hilarion* by St. Jerome).

The above account also speaks about how demons are very territorial and they protect their territory even from other demons that they also hate since there is no love in and among them. It would seem that the demon that possessed the virgin was forced by a more powerful fallen angel through occult means (sorcery and magic) to enter into her and to remain there. It did not attack the sender because he had already a more powerful spirit in him (the demon of passion) and, secondly, the virgin was vulnerable at this point in time. It must be remembered that there is a hierarchical "order" among the fallen angels which is governed by power; the more powerful demon is in command of a group of lesser demons. When those in the occult (witch doctors, faith healers, white witches, etc.) do some form of magical healing or "casting" out of

persons afflicted with spiritual maladies, they have to check first whether the oppressing spirit is of a weaker kind than that of the one giving them power. If they become aware that the oppressing spirit is more powerful than their own attached spirit, they do not take the case, but refer the victim to a more powerful occultist. They know that the more powerful spirit can retaliate against them. But if they "see" that the attacking spirit is weaker than their attached spirit, they use their attached spirit to subdue (not expel) the weaker spirit. Hence, it is known that exorcists, when dealing with persons who had sought a lot of "healing" and aid from occult practitioners, have to remove not only the last evil spirit placed there by the last occultist but also the original oppressing spirit. It is sad to say that usually, in the provinces, when a person gets afflicted with a sickness of a seeming preternatural cause (and no doctor can cure the person), they rarely turn to the Church for spiritual help. They seek instead the help of occult practitioners, especially faith healers (*albularyo*) which bring them only temporary healing, unaware that there occurs in them a greater preternatural and spiritual bondage. They forget that true supernatural healing and deliverance can only come from Christ and the Church he has founded.

The following account in the life of St. Martin of Tours shows him as an exorcist.

> "At the same period, the slave of a man called Taetradius, who was of proconsular rank, was possessed by a demon tormenting him to death with great pain. When Martin was asked to lay his hand on him, he ordered that the man should be brought to him. But it was utterly impossible for the evil spirit to be brought out from the cell where it was, so fiercely did it attack with its rabid bites those who tried to enter. Then Taetradius threw himself at the blessed man's feet, begging him to come along to the house where the possessed man was being held. But Martin said that he was unable to enter a house that belonged to a pagan, an adherent of a false religion. For at that time Taetradius was still entangled in the error of paganism. So he promised that if the demon was driven out of the boy, he would become a Christian. Then Martin laid his hand on the boy and cast off the unclean spirit from him. When he saw this, Taetradius believed in the Lord Jesus and was immediately made a catechumen; not long afterwards he was baptized and continued always to have an extraordinary affection for Martin as the person responsible for his salvation. During this same period and in the same town, as Martin was entering a house belonging to the head of some family, he stopped on the very threshold, explaining that he could see a horrifying demon in the entrance hall to the house. When he ordered

it to depart, the demon seized the owner's cook, who was in the inner part of the building. The wretched thing began to tear him with its teeth and to maul anyone it came across. The house was thrown into confusion, the household members panicked, and the people turned and ran. Martin stood in the way of this raving creature and first ordered it to stop. But when it raged and showed its teeth and, with mouth wide open, threatened to bite him, Martin put his fingers in its mouth and said, "If you have any power, eat these." But then, as if it had received white-hot metal in its jaws, it withdrew its teeth a long way, refusing to touch the holy man's fingers. Forced by these punishments and torments to flee from the body of the man who was possessed, it was not allowed to leave through his mouth but was expelled in a flow of diarrhea, leaving behind it foul traces" (*Life of St. Martin of Tours* by Sulpicius Severus).

From the above account we see in the second story how when evil spirits are expelled from a place, they seek to enter another abode. In the story, the evil spirit that seemed to be the head spirit (also called "guardian" or "ancestral") of the home (since it was at the threshold of the home signifying headship) blocked the saint from entering. When the saint expelled the spirit from the threshold, it entered and possessed the cook who was also later freed by the saint.

The next story in the life of St. Hilarion speaks about how demons can also enter into animals.

"It is not enough to mention only humans: every day brute animals that had gone wild were brought to him. One of these was a Bactrian camel of enormous size which had already trampled many people to death. Restrained by very thick ropes, it was brought to Hilarion by thirty or more men, making a great noise. Its eyes were bloodshot, it foamed at the mouth, its rolling tongue was swollen, and above every other source of terror there resounded its loud roar. The old man ordered it to be untied. At once those who had brought the animal and those who were with the old man all ran away, without exception. Hilarion went up to it by himself and said in Syriac, "You do not frighten me, devil, with your huge body. You are exactly the same in a fox as in a camel." While he was speaking, he stood with outstretched hand. The beast came up to him, raging wildly and looking as if it was going to eat him, but immediately it knelt down, bending its head right to the ground to the amazement of all those present, suddenly displaying as much gentleness as it had previously shown ferocity. But the old man explained to them that in order to harm people the devil also enter into animals; he is inflamed with

such great hatred of men that he is very keen to destroy not only them, but also their possessions. As an example of this he gave the fact that before the devil was allowed to tempt the blessed Job, he destroyed all Job's property. Hilarion said that no one ought to be disturbed by the fact that at the Lord's command, two thousand pigs were destroyed by demons, since those who had seen them would otherwise have been unable to believe that such a great number of demons had departed from one man if a large number of pigs had not at the same time fallen headlong to their deaths, proving that they were driven by many demons" (*Life of St. Hilarion* by St. Jerome).

The following narrative in the life of St. Martin of Tours shows us how the devil tries to deceive man by appearing in the form of Christ, Mama Mary, and the other saints as well as in the form of angels. This is a lesson that we, Filipinos, have to be aware of since we tend to believe easily that an apparition, locution, vision, or "mystical" experience is divine without proper discernment, using the Church's approved means or seeking assistance from Church authority (when needed). We have to be especially careful if the phenomenon is a public one (the revelations are meant for many) and not merely a private one (the revelations are only meant for the person receiving it). For public revelations, it is important to wait for Church authorities to study the revelation and make a verdict before giving full credence to it; for private revelations, a knowledgeable spiritual director is very important to help one discern its source.

Without proper guidance, Filipino Catholics can easily be led astray. This is the reason why we have so many cults in our country; they are formed around an evil spirit manifesting a power that causes awe and wonder, making us believe immediately that just because the power is beyond human nature it is automatically divine or from God. How many times have we heard of people flocking to a "Dancing Sto. Niño" or believing immediately that a so-called healer is from God just because he can heal and has statues of the saints all around him? In discerning whether a given public phenomenon is from God or not, we must have patience and wait for the Church before putting one's full trust in it; the devil is very shrewd and in the beginning allows seeming good to come from the phenomenon, it is only much later that what is evil is manifested. For example, when a supposed visionary receives messages from an apparition of a certain "saint," the messages in the beginning conform to Church teachings so it seems that the apparition is from God. Much later, when many have already given their belief in the continuing apparitions without waiting for the final verdict of the Church, the messages that are received then start to attack the Pope or a dogma of

the Church. Imagine how it would affect the faith of those persons who have already given their full faith to the apparition and the messages. When the devil acts, he can make it so that 95% of the revelations that he gives is true; but the remaining 5% which is false destroys whatever good fruit the 95% brought about; hence we must always be very careful and prudent.

> "I must now mention here the exceptional cunning the devil used to try and tempt St. Martin at that time. One day, he appeared to Martin who was praying in his cell. The devil was preceded by a bright light with which he also surrounded himself in the hope of easily tricking Martin more by means of feigned brightness. He wore a royal robe and was crowned with a diadem made of gold and jewels, wore gilded sandals, had a serene expression and a look of joy—no one could have looked less like the devil! When Martin first saw him, he was stunned and for a long time they both maintained a profound silence. Then the devil spoke first, "Martin, recognize who you are looking at. I am Christ. Intending to come down to earth, I wished to reveal myself first to you." When Martin remained silent and said nothing in reply to these words, the devil dared to repeat his bold claim. "Martin, why do you hesitate? Believe, since you can see: I am Christ." Then, as a result of the spirit's revelation, Martin understood that it was the devil, not the Lord, and so he said, "The Lord Jesus did not foretell that he would come in splendid clothes and with a shining crown; I will not believe that Christ has come unless he wears the same garments and has the same appearance as at the time of his suffering, and unless he bears the marks of the cross." At these words the devil immediately vanished like smoke. He filled the cell with such a strong smell that he left clear proof that he was the devil. In case anyone should happen to think this incident mere fiction, I actually learned of it, as I mentioned earlier, from the mouth of Martin himself" (*Life of St. Martin of Tours* by Sulpicius Severus).

The next account speaks of how persons can deceive others (which can be intentional as well as unintentional) that they are of God when their so-called powers and experiences are actually from the evil one. Hence it is also vitally important to discern properly the so-called "mystical experiences" of others, especially visionaries who say that they have messages to us from God. In our office (Archdiocese of Manila Office of Exorcism) we have encountered cases with so-called powers and who thought that they had a direct access to God due to their locutions and visions and who were starting to gain a following (the devil truly desires to be the center of attention). After we prayed over

them in Jesus' name, not only did they lose all their powers and "mystical experiences," they also lost their following which would have become a cult if the Church had failed to intervene.

> "Clarus was a young man of the highest nobility who later became a priest and now is blessed as a result of his fortunate death. After abandoning everything and going to join Martin, it was not long before he shone forth at the very summit of faith and all virtues. It happened that after he had built a hut for himself not far from the bishop's monastery and while many of the brothers were living with him, a young man called Anatolius, professing to be a monk and making a show of every form of humility and innocence, came to him and for a time lived a communal life with the others. Then, as time went on, he claimed that angels regularly conversed with him. As no one put any faith in what he said, he used certain signs to force a number of the brothers to believe him. Finally, he went so far as to declare that messengers went back and forth between himself and God: he then wanted to be considered one of the prophets. But there was no way that Clarus could be forced to believe even though Anatolius threatened him with God's anger and immediate punishment for not believing a saint. At last, Anatolius is said to have burst forth with these words: "Look! Tonight the Lord will give me a white tunic from heaven and, dressed in this, I shall remain in your midst. The fact that I have been presented with a tunic from God will be a sign to you that I am the power of God." Then great indeed was the expectation of all when they heard this claim. At about midnight, the whole monastery appeared to shake with a loud noise as of people stamping the ground. You would have seen the cell in which the young man was being kept light up with repeated flashes and you would have heard the sound of people rushing about inside, as well as a sort of murmur of numerous voices. Then when all was silent, Anatolius came out, summoned one of the brothers called Sabatius, and showed him the tunic he was wearing. Sabatius was astonished and called the others. Clarus himself came running, and when a light had been brought, they all carefully examined the garment. It was extremely soft, exceptionally white, dazzlingly bright, and made of a material that could not be identified; but when inspected by curious eyes and fingers, it seemed to be an ordinary tunic. Clarus then told the brothers to begin praying that the Lord might reveal to them more clearly what it was. So the rest of the night was spent in hymns and psalms. When daylight came, Clarus grasped Anatolius by the hand, intending to take him along to see Martin, for he was well aware that Martin could not be deceived by the devil's wiles. Then the wretched

man began to struggle and shout, saying that he was forbidden to show himself to Martin. When they forced him to go against his will, the tunic vanished in the hands of those who were dragging him along. And so, who can doubt that it was also Martin's special power that made it impossible for the devil to keep his deception secret or disguise it any longer once it was going to be brought before Martin's eyes?" (*Life of St. Martin of Tours* by Sulpicius Severus).

The next account speaks of the many ways that a demon can attack a Catholic and the many forms that he can take when he manifests himself as an apparition. He can attack directly through fear and temptation, or indirectly through deception (to lead people astray) as seen in the story.

"For they (demons) have a tendency, when wounded, to rise up with even greater violence and to change their method of attack: when they have no success with dirty thoughts, they use fears to terrify, transforming themselves into women one moment, wild animals the next moment, and then serpents as well as huge bodies with a head reaching to the roof of the house, and finally turning into troops of soldiers and an infinite number of different shapes. All these vanish as soon as the sign of the cross is made. When these means of deception have also been recognized, the demons begin to prophesy and to try to predict future events, but when they have been thwarted in these efforts, too, they summon the leader of their wickedness, the culmination of all evil, to assist them in their fight" (*Life of St. Anthony* by St. Athanasius).

ST. ANTHONY OF THE DESERT
(d. 356)

Founder of Christian monasticism. He was a prominent leader among the Desert Fathers. He has been called the "father of cenobites" because it was in great part due to him that the monastic life spread in the East and later in the West.

The final story of this chapter points to the fact that it is Jesus who is the Healer and Exorcist, not the person of the exorcist. The exorcist is just an instrument God uses to manifest his compassionate and healing love. Another important lesson that can be seen in the account below is the importance of faith (in the love and mercy of Christ) in the person of the one seeking help; it is therefore of vital importance that an exorcist evangelizes the victim properly so that he would have the living faith that touches the Heart of God and produces miracles.

"At one time, when Anthony had withdrawn from everyone's eyes and had closed his cell, refusing to receive a single visitor, a military officer called Martinianus, whose daughter was possessed by an evil spirit that tormented her, knocked at the door. He begged Anthony to help his dear child and to come out and pray to God for his daughter. Antony had not the slightest wish to open up but he looked down from above and said, "Why do you ask me for help, you who are a mortal man? I, too, am mortal and share your weakness. But if you believe in Christ whose servant I am, go and pray to God according to

your faith and your daughter will be healed." Immediately Martinianus believed and went away; and when he called on Jesus, he took his daughter home, this time restored to health. The Lord also worked many other miracles through Anthony, and justly so, for he who promised in the Gospel, *Ask and it will be given to you,* did not deny his power to the man he found worthy to receive it. For many suffering people came and slept in front of the closed entrance to Antony's cell and were cured through him by means of their faithful prayers to Christ" (*Life of St. Anthony* by St. Athanasius).

CHAPTER VIII

More Stories from the Lives of the Saints

There are numerous stories of the saints and their encounter with demonic forces and strongholds; the stories that follow are a few among them. The saints in this chapter come from the later epoch of the history of our Church.

St. Francis of Assisi and Infestation

> Once at the Place of the Portiuncula, when St. Francis was praying devoutly, as was his custom, by divine revelation he saw the Place surrounded and besieged by devils, as by a great army. But not one of them was able to enter into the Place because the friars were so holy that the devils could find no one to whom they could gain admittance. However, while they were thus persevering, one of the friars was stirred to anger and impatience against one of his companions, and he thought how he could accuse him and take revenge on him. As a result, the gate of virtue being abandoned and the door of wickedness being open, he gave the devil a way to come in. And immediately, while St. Francis was watching, one of those devils entered into the Place and attacked that brother as a winner attacks a loser, and he crouched on the friar's neck. When the compassionate Father and shepherd, who always watched over his flock very faithfully, saw that a wolf had entered to devour one of his little lambs, and knew that his sheep were in great danger, he had that friar called to him. And when the friar obediently came running to his anxious shepherd, St. Francis ordered him to reveal at once the poison of hatred against his neighbor that he had conceived and kept in his heart, as a result of which he had given himself over to the enemy. And he, seeing that

the holy Father had read his thoughts, was afraid and revealed his wound—all his poison and rancor—and acknowledged his fault and humbly asked for forgiveness and a penance. And when he had done that, he was absolved from his sin and received the penance, and all of a sudden St. Francis saw the devil fly away.[23]

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI
(1181-1226)

Founder of the Franciscan Order and the Order of the Sisters of the Poor with St. Clare, and the lay Third Order of Saint Francis. He is known as the patron saint of animals and the environment. He received the stigmata, making him the first saint known to bear the wounds of Christ's Passion.

From this true story in the life of St. Francis of Assisi, we can learn one reason why a place can become haunted or, in exorcist's terms, infested. Sin and evil done within a place attract and invite evil spirits to it. And when there are enough of them, these demons not only cause spiritual and moral temptations as well as emotional problems but also physical illnesses, psychological maladies, and so-called paranormal phenomena. Occult activities done in the place, especially Satanism, witchcraft, contacting spirits of the dead, spellcasting, sorcery, and the like, can almost immediately cause paranormal disturbances and hazards in a given location. But just as in the story, when the persons in a home, for example, pray fervently together the family prayers like the

family rosary and live lives that are pleasing to God, the demons cannot enter into their house. They are protected by the Love and Power of God. Another very important point to remember is to use and have a lot of sacramentals in the home, like holy water, exorcised salt, blessed pictures, medals, crucifixes, and statues as well as consecrating regularly the place to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Use all these with a deep faith and trust that the Love of God drives away all that can cause fear in us.

St. Teresa of Avila and Occult Paraphernalia (Charms, Amulets, and Talismans)

St. Teresa of Avila in her autobiography tells us about her priest confessor that she found out having a relationship with a woman for seven years although he continued to say Mass.

ST. TERESA OF AVILA
(1515-1582)

Also called St. Teresa of Jesus. She was a prominent Spanish mystic, Carmelite, writer of the Counter Reformation, and theologian of contemplative life through mental prayer. She was a reformer of the Carmelite Order and, with John of the Cross, a founder of the Discalced Carmelites. She wrote The Life of Teresa of Jesus, The Interior Castle, *and* The Way of Perfection. *She is a Doctor of the Church.*

> "I managed to find out more about my confessor's circumstances from members of his household. I learned more about his wretched state, and saw that the poor man was not entirely to blame. For the miserable woman had laid spells on him by means of a copper image, which she had begged him, for love of her, to wear round his neck, and no one had had enough influence on him to make him take it off… to please me, he finally gave me the copper image which I immediately got someone to throw into the river. Once this was gone, he became like one awaking from a long sleep, and began to remember all that he had done in all those years. He was amazed at himself, and grieved at his wretched state; and this time he began to loathe the woman… in the end he entirely gave up seeing the woman, and could never thank God enough for having granted him light."[24]

Infested objects include talismans (for good luck) and amulets (for protection) which have spirits attached to them in order to bring about the effect desired. The spirit infesting the talisman or amulet will have a claim of ownership over the person using such objects, hence it would guard zealously its possession from other evil spirits whether they be from a place or sent through curses. But if, for example, a sorcerer or witch who is deeply involved in the dark arts sends a fallen angel more powerful than the evil spirit attached to the amulet, the person and the spirit "protecting" him fall into the effects of the curse; they are both subjugated by this more powerful entity. As was mentioned previously, demons hate one another and are very territorial over their places or persons where they are attached to; when a more powerful fallen angel comes along, they are not expelled but are placed in subjugation to this new spirit. Those in the occult who are sought for to help in a spiritual dilemma can detect when they are up against a more powerful spirit and would back off lest they get hurt. But a person under the protection of God is totally protected from all demons and even Satan himself, because he is the Creator while all the rest of the fallen angels are mere creatures, and if God so decides, he could annihilate them from existing.

Infested objects also include all occult paraphernalia used in sorcery, animistic faith healing, and witchcraft. They could be ingredients for curses, potions, hexes, and the like. Ordinary everyday objects found in a home may also be infested due to certain circumstances that made a spirit prefer it as its dwelling place; examples could be an antique statue (even of a saint if it has not been blessed or is used for magick purposes), hence we see infested statues of the Santo Niño "twirling and dancing" or a large mirror, old painting, statues of Eastern deities like Buddha and the like. With regard to these objects, the evil spirits "inhabiting" the object must be expelled through deliverance/exorcism.

Even one of these objects, for example, bought in an antique store, can make a place haunted. I remember meeting an exorcist in the United States who was exorcising a home to no avail; the paranormal occurrences did not stop. It was only when a person who could discern spirits told him that a certain painting on the wall had a spirit inhabiting it that a resolution was in sight. When the painting was taken away, all manifestations of a preternatural order ended. As Catholics, we get rid of all objects from occult practitioners and use only the sacramentals of the Church used for centuries by the saints, not relying on these blessed objects as though they had power of their own but placing our full faith and confidence on God and his saints which they represent.

St. Bridget of Sweden and Demonic Oppression

The canonization process of St. Bridget of Sweden received a written document containing this personal testimony on behalf of the saint:

> Picziolella, an elderly unattractive woman from Nola, was raped every night by a violent unclean spirit in human form. At first, she had the female neighbors sit up with her at night, and then her daughter and son-in-law; but the spirit continued to come and rape her after extinguishing the lights and paralyzing (*bangungot*) the helpless bystanders. Reception of the sacraments brought her no relief (done in a magical manner) and she turned to witchcraft. After Raymond… gave her a magic charm to wear in her hair (this was an amulet for use against other evil spirits), the attacks came less frequently. The old woman then turned to Nicholas Orsini, the Count of Nola; and he referred her case to Alphonsus Pecha, who was in Nola at the time. Alphonsus took the woman to Naples to see Birgitta (St. Bridget). After Birgitta showed miraculous knowledge of the charm in the woman's hair, the woman finally admitted her involvement with witchcraft and threw the charm away. At Birgitta's command, she fasted and prayed, heard Mass, and received communion (we can presume that she at this time did these obligations not in a legalistic or magical manner but from her heart). Thereafter she was quite free of her vexation.[25]

We again see here, with regard to the charm placed in the hair of the oppressed, the use of the occult against the occult. Do we not hear of witches or family of witches doing curses against another group of witches and this second group performing spells for protection and

counterspells for revenge? Here we see how demons hate not only each other but also how they include man in their hatred against all that is good by mutual self-destruction.

In the above story, note also the manner that demons also attack those who are sleeping (Note: in sleep, a person is more sensitive to the spirit world, that is, he becomes more psychic); it can be a sexual assault that is very physical in nature or a sort of paralyzing attack on the body. In our Office of Exorcism, we have encountered these cases of sexual assaults that sometimes even leave marks and bruises on the victim's body. This is why the use of sacramentals before going to bed is part of our Catholic tradition. Holy water must not be simply left in a container on the dresser or shelf; it must be used. How? By sprinkling it around the room a number of times a week (while praying to God a personal prayer for protection) and it must also be used on the body of the person (making the sign of the cross on the forehead with fingers that have been dipped in holy water before going to bed). It would be good, when using holy water, to always pray a personal prayer of protection to God, Mama Mary, or one's guardian angel.

In this story in the life of St. Bridget, it is also good to note that the most important personages in deliverance from oppression are God and the victim. If the victim is sincere in seeking God's presence in his life and not mere "magical" healing without any connection to conversion (return to a relationship with God), God immediately responds with the power of his love. So we see in the story that, although the victim of oppression did not approach a priest to be prayed over, she was still freed from the demonic oppression. The victim focused in intensifying her spiritual life and because of this, the demons who hate and are burned by the sacred (grace in the soul of the person) left on their own accord. That is why in the ministry of exorcism and deliverance, evangelization of the person before any praying over is extremely important.

St. John Mary Vianney and Demonic Possession

> Once, there was one poor old woman from the neighborhood who had been suffering from demonic possession for forty years. The wretched woman sang and danced the whole day in front of the church. She shouted at the top of her voice and laughed boisterously. Passersby looked at her with wonder, others with compassion, and still others with scorn. Concerned people made her drink a few drops of holy water, whereupon she flew into such a rage that she began to bite into the walls of the church. Then she ran around and banged herself against the church walls. This was alternated with shrieking and

> convulsions. Her son who accompanied her was helpless. A priest then ushered her to a spot where M. Vianney would pass. When the saint came, he blessed the poor woman, from whose mouth blood was flowing. She instantly became calm. Her son related that she had been in that pitiful state for forty long years, but that she had never before shown herself either so furious or so calm. After the saint's blessing, her dreadful feats never returned.[26]

In this story, we see the poor woman suffering already for forty years. Imagine if the saint did not expel the demons in her, how many more years she would have suffered and imagine how her life would end. There are today countless people who suffer and have endured their demonic torments for a very long time already; and the sad thing is, they will continue to suffer for lack of priests trained to diagnose and combat extraordinary demonic afflictions and the unbelief of many regarding the existence of the devil as well as his preternatural power to torment man through bodily oppression and possession. How sad that many tend to see everything and all that occurs in the world only with the lens of science; they forget that the spirit world exists all around us and that the world as we know it will end (including science). Unless we believe fully the words of Jesus in the Gospel regarding the spiritual war all around us, we will continue to suffer unneeded torments.

St. Faustina Kowalska of the Divine Mercy and the Experience of Hell

St. Faustina was allowed by God to experience the reality of hell in order to warn the world that the devil, his demons, and the place of their never-ending abode which is hell are real, and that there are souls already there. It is God's mercy that desires that we, his children, know the reality of what it means to lose God, the ultimate and only source of goodness, love, joy, beauty, and truth. God desires for us to know the truth that outside of him, there is nothing but misery, since all that is good, true, and beautiful comes solely from him.

Hell shows us the reality of what sin really does to us and will do to us if we die in it. While on earth, we can never really tangibly experience and know perfectly the full depravity and evilness of sin and its effects on the soul. It is only in the afterlife, when the life of the senses is over, that we would truly learn its true evilness. It is so evil that it has in a sense cost the life of God (in Jesus).

Let us not forget that when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, he sweated blood. Now, in the entire history of mankind no one has ever

sweated blood, even with the anticipation of an approaching horrific torture and dreadful death. But we see Jesus sweating blood. Now why is that? Because at that moment when he takes upon himself all of our sins, he experiences the full effects, the full brunt, of what sin truly does to a person. He experienced in a sense the full gravity of what it is to be cut off from God—to be in a sense abandoned by God. He experienced it in order to pay the price of our sins, so that we ourselves would not experience it. If we are therefore tempted to belittle sin in our life, let us look at what it did to Christ; let us look at the cross; and let us be reminded of the reality of hell.

ST. FAUSTINA KOWALSKA
(1905-1938)

A Polish nun, visionary and mystic. She was God's instrument in making his Divine Mercy known and in spreading devotion to it.

The following accounts are taken from St. Faustina's well-known book, *Diary*.

> "I, Sister Faustina, by the order of God, have visited the abysses of hell so that I might tell souls about it and testify to its existence. I cannot speak about it now; but I have received a command from God to leave it in writing. The devils were full of hatred for me, but they

had to obey me at the command of God. What I have written is but a pale shadow of the things I saw. But I noticed one thing: that most of the souls there are those who disbelieved that there is hell. When I came to, I could hardly recover from the fright. How terribly souls suffer there! Consequently, I pray even more fervently for the conversion of sinners. I incessantly plead God's mercy upon them. O my Jesus, I would rather be in agony until the end of the world, amidst the greatest suffering, than offend you by the least sin.

"Today I was led by an angel to the chasms of hell. It is a place of great torture; how awesomely large and extensive it is! The kinds of torture I saw: the first torture that constitutes hell is the loss of God; the second is perpetual remorse of conscience; the third is that one's condition will never change; the fourth is the fire that will penetrate the soul without destroying it—a terrible suffering, since it is a purely spiritual fire, lit by God's anger; the fifth torture is continual darkness and a terrible suffocating smell, and, despite the darkness, the devils and the souls of the damned see each other and all the evil, both of others and their own; the sixth torture is the constant company of Satan; the seventh torture is horrible despair, hatred of God, vile words, curses, and blasphemies. These are the tortures suffered by all the damned together, but that is not the end of the sufferings. There are special tortures destined for particular souls. These are the torments of the senses. Each soul undergoes terrible and indescribable sufferings, related to the manner in which it has sinned. There are caverns and pits of torture where one form of agony differs from another. I would have died at the very sight of these tortures if the omnipotence of God has not supported me. Let the sinner know that he will be tortured throughout all eternity, in those senses which he made use of to sin. I am writing this at the command of God, so that no soul may find an excuse by saying there is no hell, or that nobody has ever been there, and so no one can say what it is like."[27]

What a horrible place it truly is; let us therefore, while we are still alive, have recourse to the mercy of God especially found in the sacrament of Reconciliation and truly live for him while there is still time; when we leave this world, we will meet God's justice because the time of mercy in a sense would have ended. God is infinitely saddened and hurt when a soul (whom he has created with love to be with him for all eternity) ends up in hell but he has given man the freedom to choose him in love and man can renounce this love in freedom.

While man is alive, God will always try to attract him to himself, but what God will never do is to use force to make man love him. True love is a choice and can therefore never be coerced or forced from the

beloved; if love is forced, then it ceases to be love. So man can always abuse this gift of freedom and live a life in hate and selfishness. May we always remember that freedom is a great gift from God but also a responsibility that has eternal repercussions.

The next account is another 20th century revelation given by God through Mama Mary on the reality of the demons and hell. Here we go to the experience of the three children of Fatima, Sr. Lucia, Blessed Francisco, and Blessed Jacinta. What follows is the so-called Second Secret of Fatima. Sister Lucia in her memoirs tells us very vividly:

> "Our Lady showed us a large sea of fire which seemed to be beneath the earth. Plunged in this fire were the demons and the souls who were like embers, transparent and black or bronze colored, with human forms which floated about in the conflagration, borne by the flames which issued from it with clouds of smoke, falling on all sides as sparks fall in great conflagrations, without weight or equilibrium, among shrieks and groans of sorrow and despair, which horrified us and caused us to quake with fear. The devils were distinguished by horrible and loathsome forms of animals, frightful and unknown, but transparent and black… this vision vanished in a moment. Providentially, our good heavenly Mother had promised us in the first apparition to take us to heaven. Otherwise, I think we would have died of fright and horror." Mama Mary then told the three children sadly and kindly, "You have seen hell where poor sinners go."[28]

BLESSED JACINTA MARTO
(1910-1920)

Together with her brother Francisco and her cousin Lúcia dos Santos, she witnessed three apparitions of an angel in 1916 and several apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1917. She was deeply convinced of the need to save sinners through penance and sacrifice as the Virgin had reportedly instructed the children to do.

A final point I wish to stress is this: it is not because God needs our love that he seeks us to love him. God is fully fulfilled in himself. He seeks us to love him because he knows that it is only he who can truly give man true and everlasting fulfillment. If there was someone or something greater than God that would fully glorify and satisfy man, God himself, because he loves us infinitely, would direct us to that object. But there is none above God; it is only he and his love that can fully and permanently fulfill man. God is our Creator and we were created to be fulfilled and glorified by him; we were created for God that he may share his love and glory with us. If a man therefore dies choosing to scorn God and his love, what will become of him? What is there outside of God and his love?

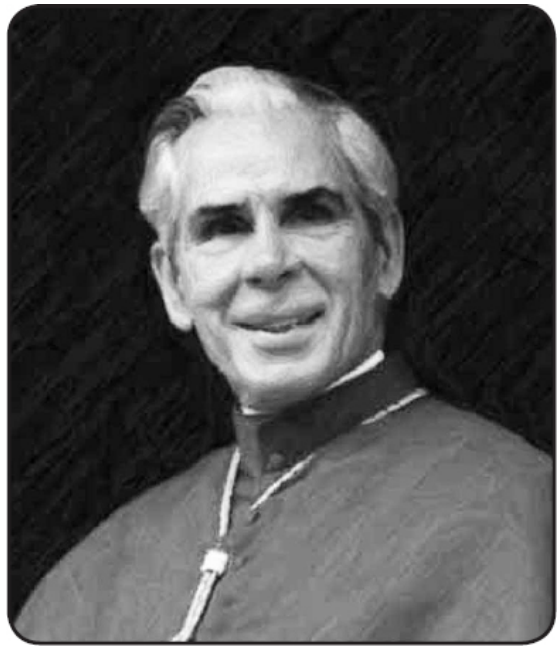
CHAPTER IX

Spiritual Warfare Notebook 1 —Spiritual Combat

"Satan has all the skill in the world to induce people to deny his existence in the name of rationalism and of every other system of thought which seeks all possible means to avoid recognizing his activity" (Blessed Pope John Paul II).

"Evil is not merely a lack of something, but an effective agent, a living, spiritual being, perverted and perverting. A terrible reality. Mysterious and frightening. It is contrary to the teaching of the Church to refuse to recognize the existence of such reality" (Pope Paul VI).

"Do not mock the Gospels and say there is no Satan. Evil is too real in the world to say that. Do not say the idea of Satan is dead and gone. Satan never gains so many cohorts, as when in his shrewdness he spreads the rumor that he is long since dead" (Servant of God Fulton Sheen).



SERVANT OF GOD FULTON SHEEN
(1895-1979)

"This matter of the devil and of the influence he can exert on individuals as well as on communities, entire societies, or events is a very important chapter of Catholic doctrine which should be studied again, although it is given little attention today" (Pope Paul VI).

American archbishop known for his preaching and especially his work on television and radio. He was a renowned theologian. He is often referred to as one of the first televangelists.

The devil is real and he wages a war against us, that many, including some Catholics, either do not know, or are led not to believe, that he can, in any way, tangibly affect them. This is the great deception of the devil which causes so many of us to take for granted the vulnerability of our souls.

"The chief of all the enemy summons innumerable demons and scatters them, some to the city and some to another throughout the whole world, so that no province, no place, no state of life, no individual is overlooked. He goes around to lay snares for men to seek to chain them" (St. Ignatius of Loyola).

"The devil does not sleep, but works hard to make you lose your soul. Will

you then continue to rest when your eternal salvation is at stake?" (St. Augustine).

"Remember that the devil never sleeps, but seeks our ruin in a thousand ways" (St. Angela Merici).

If one does not take seriously the reality of the devil as Jesus himself and the saints of God did, the devil will be able to gain easy access to the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, psychological, physical, as well as the material and relational dimensions of our lives. He would then cause mayhem and destruction not only in individual lives but also in entire communities and societies.

ST. ANGELA MERICI
(1474-1540)

Founder of the Congregation of the Ursulines, a Congregation dedicated to the religious education of girls, especially poor children.

"This is the time when throughout the world the Christian battle line must combat the raging devil… now is the time to be equipped in spiritual arms and aroused by the heavenly trumpet, to enter the battle" (Pope St. Leo the Great).

Many persons have come to our office for help, who discovered much later how the devil blocked from their lives the many blessings that God desired to give them whether they be material, relational, or spiritual. After experiencing liberation from demonic bondage, all these areas of their lives have immediately improved. Jesus himself promised that if we seek first the Kingdom of God, all else will be given to us. Let us remember then the truth that sin and any type of demonic bondage, if unchecked, can block many of the blessings that God desires to give us.

"Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for [someone] to devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith, knowing that your fellow believers throughout the world undergo the same sufferings. The God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory through Christ [Jesus] will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you after you have suffered a little" (1 Pt 5:8-10).

"For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens" (Eph 6:12).

We cannot be found ignorant of this spiritual war, of which St. Paul speaks about, if we desire to glorify God and obtain all the blessings he has planned for us. We must fight this battle if we desire to save not only our souls but also those of others. True followers of Christ have to enter into this war and become true knights of the Lord.

"Christianity is warfare and Christians are spiritual soldiers" (St. Robert Southwell).

"Let us always keep before our eyes the fact that here on earth we are on a battlefield and that in paradise we shall receive the crown of victory" (St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina).

"The soldier of Christ, trained by Christ's commands and instructions, will not tremble at the thought of battle, but will be ready to receive the crown of victory" (St. Cyprian of Carthage).

"The Lord gives the signal for us to stand guard in camp, to build the tower for which we may be able to discern and ward off the enemy of our eternal life. The heavenly trumpet of Christ urges the soldier on to battle" (St.

Augustine).

So we cannot merely sit back as passive spectators focusing merely on our day-to-day activities. There is a battle going on all around us and the ultimate prize is what God loves so infinitely and intimately, hence the devil desires to destroy it—our very souls.

"The devil tempts us. His aim is death, not so much you or I: we are nothing. It is about God, a hatred of God" (Blessed Teresa of Calcutta).

"We should all realize that no matter where or how a man dies, if he is in the state of mortal sin and does not repent, when he could have done so and did not, the devil tears his soul from his body with such anguish and distress that only a person who has experienced it can appreciate it" (St. Francis of Assisi).

BLESSED TERESA OF CALCUTTA
(1910-1997)

Founder of the Missionaries of Charity. She established Nirmal Hriday, a hospice where the poor and the dying could die with dignity instead of on the streets. For over 45 years she ministered to the poor, the sick, orphans, and the dying, while guiding the Missionaries of Charity's expansion. In history, no other person has ever been beatified so soon after death.

Entering into the spiritual battle and becoming a true knight of the Lord means that we are proactive in our spiritual lives, if not downright aggressive. We not merely defend our souls but we attack what is not of God within ourselves and outside of ourselves!

"You must fight energetically, since you know very well what great wounds the undefiled Spouse of Christ Jesus (the Catholic Church) has suffered, and how vigorous is the destructive attack of her enemies" (Venerable Pope Pius IX).

Being aggressive in our spiritual lives means, first and foremost, making sure that one's life is centered on God and all else regarding life revolves around it; not the other way around wherein God is brought into the picture only when one is in need or seeks something from God (This type of life will be very vulnerable to the many deceits, temptations, and attacks of the enemy).

A true knight fights aggressively against all that would try to block, replace, or weaken the primary place that God holds in one's life; he also uses all means that will ensure this place of God in his heart. This person becomes, therefore, a discerning individual regarding the choices that he makes in life with the principal standard being whether it would please and glorify God or not.

A second point is that a true knight of Christ combats evil and sin wherever and whenever he finds them. He, in a sense, becomes God's instrument in the world to destroy the strongholds of Satan. We must remember that the three enemies of Catholics are the devil, the world, and the flesh. The devil is the principal enemy and the flesh and the world are his tools which he manipulates so craftily to destroy man's relationship and intimacy with God.

Focusing first on the first enemy, the flesh or what we also call concupiscence, a Catholic continually combats the "old man" in himself so that it becomes truly subordinate to his faith life; it is only by overcoming the "old man" will the "new man" in Christ be truly born.

"The sins that lead more souls to hell are the sins of the flesh" (Our Lady of Fatima to Blessed Jacinta Marto).

A great danger today is the overemphasis of the humanistic psychological principle that teaches that man is totally good and, if left on his own, will tend towards self-actualization and self-fulfillment. Anything therefore that inhibits or infringes man's self-expression is deemed as repressive and an obstacle to growth. This belief, in an

exaggerated form when it entered the Church, caused a lot of damage. The ascetical life, which was geared towards "destroying" the "old man" in us and which included mortification, penance, sacrifice, self-denial, self-mastery, self-control, and self-discipline, was seen as repressive, medieval, and outmoded.

The author, Fr. Timothy Costello, gives a summary of what humanistic psychology is all about. It is actually a loose assortment of theories that gained prominence during the 1960s. *"The leading names associated with humanistic psychology are Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, and Fritz Perls."*[29] These theories are also called self-fulfillment or self-actualization theories and are founded on two fundamental assumptions namely: the spontaneity of human growth and the inherent goodness of human nature. This means that human nature can be trusted without reservation to unfold in an orderly manner towards its fullest potentials as long as the environment is supportive of it. *"Neither Maslow nor Rogers accept the possibility that the self may be subject to bias, deception, error, or sin and, as a consequence, attribute any failure in growth and any pathological development to a hostile external environment over which the individual has little control."*[30] *Therefore, "the path to health, maturity, and full personal identity is to live in accordance with one's human nature."*[31]

"The humanistic psychologies encourage an expressive individualism in the promotion of values such as freedom, spontaneity, creativity, enthusiasm, and human potential. The egocentric dynamic is explicitly evident in the emphasis placed on self-expression, self-improvement, and self-development as manifestations of self-actualization."[32]

Due therefore to an overemphasis of the humanistic vision of man, one sees the emergence of a "culture of 'self-expression' in which sexual pleasure is a 'right' and the mastery of one's sexual desires is often deemed 'repression.' … celibacy is peculiar at best and pathological at worst. Thus the connection was quickly made between the Catholic Church's practice of priestly celibacy and the crisis of clergy sexual abuse. Celibates, it was suggested, were especially prone to sexual predation because they were maladjusted psychologically and required some form of release, however perverse, for their sexual tensions."[33]

As can be seen today, training in the life of virtue by the practice of the ascetical life is seen as outmoded and outdated, a return to an age of superstition and rigidity. No wonder that those who practice the ascetical life are seen as "not normal." When he made a report regarding the different new movements seen within the Church which are returning to the more traditional practices, an author noted *"that many traditional Christian spiritual practices, from simple acts of self-denial to the acceptance of great sacrifices in order to grow in sanctity, are seen in these accounts as 'sect-like' or 'cult-like.' "*[34] One therefore finds a lack of

emphasis today on the ascetical life especially on the formation of the virtues. *"The self-detachment, the self-transcendence proclaimed by Christ as the royal road to the love of God and neighbor is replaced by self-fulfillment."*[35]

When we now go to Christian anthropology, we see the very contradictory truth regarding human nature: yes, we were created good by God, but because of original sin, human nature was wounded and now tends more easily to what is evil. St. Paul himself speaks about the war in his nature: the good that he must do, he does not do and the evil that he must not do, he does. So the psychological culture of "self-expression," which sees man as always tending towards what is good, hence he must merely be liberated from all inhibitions, does not take into account the very simple truth that we, as human beings, are wounded in our nature.

What is this woundedness in human nature? According to the well-known expert on spirituality, Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, OP, it is the disruption of the original triple harmony that was present before the Fall: the harmony between God and the soul, between the soul and the body, and between the body and exterior things. Hence according to him, the effect is seen in the triple disorder which St. John speaks of when he writes of the pride of life, concupiscence of the flesh, and concupiscence of the eyes respectively. Further, St. Thomas Aquinas states in more precise terms what these effects cause to the human person: we are born with our will turned away from God, inclined to what is evil, weak in regard to attaining what is good, with our reason prone to error, our sensitive appetites strongly disposed to inordinate pleasure and to anger, which is a source of every type of injustice. Where comes pride, forgetfulness of God, and all types of egoism that wishes to find happiness on earth only. This is what we are born with. This is a basic tenet of our Faith that the new psychological theories have not taken into account but which is a truth that is nonetheless very much present and operative.

So, when society overlooks the reality of concupiscence and persons are given the license to give free expression to all that they desire and feel, the world ends up with a lot of people who are proud, self-centered, hedonistic, materialistic, impulsive, selfish, and prone to addictions, sexual and the like. A knight of Christ is never ignorant of the battle within him and for love of God and for his greater glory, he, like the saints of old, by grace and will, returns through an ascetical life (mortification, detachment, self-sacrifice, self-control, and self-mastery) the subordination of the body to reason and reason to Faith. He therefore becomes a well-tuned instrument that follows faithfully and with facility whatever the will of God demands of him.

Focusing now on the world as the enemy of a Christian, we must remember that what we mean is not the world as such, but the so-called "worldly spirit."

"When the devil is called the god of this world, it is not because he made it but because we serve him with our worldliness" (St. Thomas Aquinas).

Well-known author Fr. Jordan Aumann, OP in his book, *Spiritual Theology*, speaks about the worldly spirit and some ways in which they are seen in society today.

First, the author speaks about the false maxims in the world that goes contrary to the Gospel values. There is the exaltation of riches, pleasure, comfort, fame, violence. The true values which are essentially spiritual have been forgotten, if not seen as ludicrous. Try speaking about holiness and saintliness in almost any worldly gathering and you may be looked upon as weird or eccentric. Another false maxim is to enjoy life while you can, finding maximum security in the world and maximum bodily comfort. Today, dependence on God is seen as demeaning and being independent of him is seen as a sign of intellectual maturity. What an illusion! It is the same sin as that of Lucifer. If God ever removed his thought on anyone of us even for a split second, even if one were the most powerful man on earth, he would fall back to nothingness!

Some other examples given by the author are: that agnostics and atheists are people who think for themselves, persons of loose morals are considered sophisticated and mature, and persons who reject all authority and objective morality are champions of personal freedom.

Another manifestation of the worldly spirit is the ridicule and persecution of those who strive to live honestly and decently as well as the exaltation of living as one wants to and mock those who obey and control themselves according to moral standards. How true this is today. Looking only at our country, how many Catholics are still 100% faithful to the teachings of the Church especially when it comes to family and life issues? The Church is seen as an obstacle to happiness and freedom! Man and not God anymore has become the ultimate determiner of what is right and wrong. If one cannot have faith and trust that the Church speaks always the Mind of God (the gift of infallibility) in matters of faith and morals, why belong to it? A cafeteria-style Catholicism where one believes and follows only what one wants to is no Catholicism at all since the self and not God is the standard of what is true and good.

"Clearly the person who accepts the Church as an infallible guide will believe

whatever the Church teaches" (St. Thomas Aquinas).

The third manifestation according to Fr. Aumann is that pleasures and diversions of those who observe no control in regard to the lower appetites (excesses in sex and in the use of drugs, alcohol, and food) are accepted. It is sad that sometimes they are not merely accepted as an ordinary part of societal life but that persons who are addicted to the sexual vices are sometimes even seen as "macho" or manly. The author also mentions how movies, magazines, and other media entertainment do not anymore stick to authentic moral standards. And this is sad since the media is one of the most powerful influences in any society. In our country, the media that caters to the "old man" in us (self-will, selfishness, vengeance, violence, power, money, sex, pornography, and sensationalism) is what sells and therefore good Catholics who work in the media are tempted to follow suit.

Now with regard to the world (the mentality of the world that goes against the Gospel values of God's Kingdom), a true Christian stands up to be counted as a disciple of the Lord; he is never ashamed to profess his faith publicly (at home and at work) and he does not leave the Master when the going gets tough. He knows that the Gospel message of the Lord will always be countercultural; he always remembers the words of the Lord teaching that if the world hated the Master, it will also hate the disciple.

So the Christian knight speaks out the truth of Christ with courage and zeal and combats evil and sin even though he may sometimes feel that he has to stand alone. Of course, in reality, he knows in faith that he is not alone since God his Father, Jesus his Lord and Brother, the Holy Spirit his strength, Mama Mary, his Mother with all the saints, St. Michael, his protector, with all the angels of heaven as well as all the poor souls in purgatory stand beside him and around him!

"In our time more than ever before, the chief strength of the wicked lies in the cowardice and weakness of good men and all the strength of Satan's reign is due to the easy-going weakness of Catholics" (Pope St. Pius X).

"We must never lose sight of the fact that we are either saints or outcasts, that we must live for heaven or hell; there is no middle path in this. You either belong wholly to the world or wholly to God. If people would do for God what they do for the world, what a great number of Christians would go to heaven" (St. Jean Marie Vianney).

A Christian knight remains steadfast to the end even though it may cost him a lot (even to the shedding of his blood), knowing that he is on the winning side and that at the end of life he will be judged not by the world and its standards but by the standards of God alone. If Jesus shed even the last drop of his blood for him, he finds it the greatest honor and privilege to suffer for love of him.

"The Church has ever proved indestructible. Her persecutors have failed to destroy her; in fact, it was during times of persecution that the Church grew more and more; while the persecutors themselves, and those whom the Church would destroy, are the very ones who came to nothing. Again, errors have assailed her; but in fact, the greater the numbers of errors that have arisen, the more has the truth been made manifest. Nor has the Church failed before the assaults of demons; for she is like a tower of refuge to all who fight against the Devil" (St. Thomas Aquinas).

"As we do battle and fight in the contest of faith, God, his angels, and Christ watch us. How exalted is the glory, how great the joy of engaging in a contest with God presiding, of receiving a crown with Christ as judge" (St. Cyprian of Carthage).

"In spite of all opposition, his divine Heart will eventually triumph; Satan with all his adherents will be confounded. Happy will they be who have been the means of establishing his empire" (St. Margaret Mary Alacoque of the Sacred Heart).

ST. MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE
(1647-1690)

A Visitation Sister. She experienced visions of Christ where she was informed that she was his chosen instrument to spread devotion to his Sacred Heart, instructed her in a devotion that was to become known as the Nine Fridays and the Holy Hour and asked that the Feast of the Sacred Heart be established.

"I understand that our enemies are strong, very strong, but when one fights alongside Jesus, how can one have any doubt about winning the battle?" (St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina).

"He said not: you shall not be troubled, you shall not be tempted, you shall not be distressed, but he said: you shall not be overcome" (Blessed Julian of Norwich).

"Doing little by little what we can, we will have hardly anything else to fight against; it is the Lord who in our defense takes up the battle against the demons and against the world" (St. Teresa of Avila).

"Jesus permits the spiritual combat as purification, not as a punishment. The trial is not unto death but unto salvation" (St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina).

CHAPTER X

Spiritual Warfare Notebook 2 —The Spiritual Knight

"[God] Who trained my hands for war, my arms to bend even a bow of bronze" (Psalm 18:35).

The medieval knight was someone who was devoted to his Christian religion, his lord, and the code of chivalry; he defended the rights of his lord and was always ready to enter into combat when enemies threatened the person of his lord and his kingdom. His identity was synonymous with bravery, loyalty, honor, and service to women. He was trained to fulfill his duties of protector from a tender age of around six or seven. He was trained to be a superb fighting machine: an expert horseman, agile and trained in all sorts of weapons such as lances, swords, daggers, axes, spears, and maces. He was also expected to learn all the qualities of a noble person such as reading, writing, and proper courtly behavior. When the young squire reached the prime of his life, he was knighted or sealed like the Roman soldiers of old in a religious ceremony wherein he gave his life to serving the cause of his lord and master as well as to live out the chivalric virtues befitting his calling. Being knighted meant that one accepted the call to live out all the religious and chivalric values. Many knights called themselves "soldiers of Christ." When enemies menaced those he swore to protect, he would ride out in full battle armor, riding on his trained large warhorse. He carried on one hand his heavy shield and on the other hand his lance. He was clad in body armor of mail or plate. On his shield, person, and horse, he wore his coat of arms to signify to which noble family he belonged to. On his belt he wore his large iron and/or steel sword that

could smash through wood and metal. His entire life was focused on defense and combat; but it was simply a means to a higher cause.

"I long to see you a true knight, strong in your fight against the devil's every trick as long as we are on this battlefield, surrounded by enemies who are constantly fighting against us" (St. Catherine of Siena).

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA
(1347-1380)

A Dominican tertiary and one of the greatest mystics of the West. She was a scholastic philosopher and theologian. She worked to bring the Papacy back to Rome from its displacement in France and established peace among the Italian city-states. She is a Doctor of the Church.

Now, a spiritual knight is the modern knight of Christ and of his Body, the Church. The spiritual knight is trained not only for defense but for attack. He takes up the standard of Christ to do battle against the forces of evil whenever and wherever he finds them; he aggressively seeks out the strongholds of the devil in order to demolish them with the power and authority of Christ his Lord. He enters into sometimes bloody hand-to-hand combat with the minions of the kingdom of darkness to defend the rights of the Lord his God, retake what properly belongs to God, and extending even to the ends of the earth the victory he won for us. The spiritual knight is a warrior of the Church, the Body of Christ. He

pledges to enter into combat against the spiritual enemies of the Church that threaten to attack and conquer what properly belongs to her. The spiritual knight places himself on the line to do battle and to set free all captives who fall under the bondage of the evil one. He is trained in spiritual warfare; he is always fully protected with the strongest of spiritual armor and is adept in wielding the varied spiritual weapons given to him by Christ his Lord. He is prepared, forever watchful and ready for combat.

"But in the case of the evil one, it is not possible ever to lay aside one's armor, it is not possible even to take sleep, for one who would remain always unscathed. For one of two things must be: either to fall and perish unarmed, or to stand equipped and ever watchful. For he ever stands with his own battle array, watching for our indolence, and laboring more zealously for our destruction, than we for our salvation" (St. John Chrysostom).

For those who are especially serious in their spiritual life, they must be constantly aware of the fact that they would be very visible in Satan's radar. They must therefore be more watchful, properly armored, and with weapons always on the ready.

"The devil only tempts souls that wish to abandon sin and those in a state of grace. The others belong to him: he has no need to tempt them" (St. Jean Marie Vianney).

"The devil strains every nerve to secure the souls which belong to Christ" (St. Sebastian).

"Blessed are those who are tempted. It is when the devil sees that a soul is tending toward union with God that he redoubles his effort. The greatest of all evils is not to be tempted, because there are then grounds for believing the devil looks upon us as his property" (St. John Vianney).

ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX
(1873-1897)

"Satan stations more devils on monastery walls than in dens of iniquity, for the latter offer no resistance" (Servant of God Fulton Sheen).

Also known as St. Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face. She applied for permission to enter the Carmelite Convent at fifteen and when refused by the superior, went to Rome with her father to seek the consent of the Holy Father, Leo XIII. He left the decision in the hands of the superior, who finally consented. She wrote The Story of a Soul*, one of the widely read modern spiritual autobiographies. She is a Doctor of the Church and co-patron of the missions.*

All well-equipped medieval knights had tough all-around metal armor that could stop the strongest of blows from the heaviest of swords. For the spiritual knight, the armor is made up, first and foremost, with the life of grace; this is his greatest and first line of defense against the spiritual enemy.

"A soul in the state of grace has nothing to fear from demons, who are cowards capable of running away from the look of a child" (St. Thérèse of Lisieux).

"The soul that is united with God is feared by the devil as the one who is where God himself is" (St. John of the Cross).

The spiritual knight is therefore very careful and watchful to remain in the state of grace (friendship with God). The knight of the Lord knows that grace in his soul will be the "wedding garment" that will allow him to join in the spiritual banquet that will take place in heaven at the end of time.

"The devil never runs upon a man to seize him with his claws until he sees him on the ground, already having fallen by his own will" (St. Thomas More).

"When we are in deadly sin, we do blindly sell ourselves to the devil. I beg you, for the love of Christ crucified: let's get out of such slavery" (St. Catherine of Siena).

"Committing sin makes us strangers to God and partners with the devil" (St. Basil the Great).

He also makes sure that not only is his armor always in place, but that he constantly strengthens it by growing in holiness of life, developing each day the life of prayer and the life of virtue.

Some of the more important virtues that he develops are humility and courage. These two virtues in the heart of the spiritual knight are complementary virtues. As one becomes more and more humble, his courage grows; as one's courage increases in spiritual warfare, one's humility is also positively affected.

"Satan defeats only the proud and cowardly, because the humble are strong. Nothing will confuse or frighten a humble soul" (St. Faustina Kowalska of the Divine Mercy).

A true knight of the Lord is clothed in humility and littleness, never focusing on his strength but relying entirely on God; this is the reason why he is fearless. If God is on our side, what strong army can stand against us! A humble knight is never defeated because he fights with the power of God.

"I saw the snares that the enemy spreads out over the world and I said groaning, 'What can get through from such snares?' Then I heard a voice saying to me, 'Humility' " (St. Anthony of the Desert).

"It was pride that caused the fall of Lucifer and Adam. If you should ask me what are the ways of God, I would tell you that the first is humility. Not that there are no other precepts to give, but if humility does not precede all that we do, our efforts are fruitless" (St. Augustine).

Humility is seen in the heart of a knight when he uses all means to remain close to the Father and listens attentively to his teachings and guidance through the Church; he is not a know-it-all and he is no lone ranger. He strives to learn from those who have gone before him, the saints of God, and always follows their example especially when it comes to combat with the devil. In a sense, he always follows faithfully the teachings and learnings of the Church regarding spiritual warfare. He knows that by himself he will be easily led astray and defeated.

"Let us not deceive ourselves. If we do not have humility, we have nothing" (St. Vincent de Paul).

Humility in his heart is also manifested in the way he never becomes proud in any of his triumphs against the forces of darkness since he knows deep in his heart that everything good done by him is because of God's grace. He therefore makes sure that only God is glorified by him and others when any good comes from him; his only satisfaction is that in his own little way, he has made God happy.

"The most powerful weapon to conquer the devil is humility. For, as he does not know at all how to employ it, neither does he know how to defend himself from it" (St. Vincent de Paul).

"If you could work wonders and drive out devils—all that would be extrinsic to you; it would not belong to you and you could not boast of it. But there is one thing of which we can boast; we can boast of our humiliations and in taking up daily the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (St. Francis of Assisi).

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
(1580-1660)

Patron of all charitable groups. In 1625 he founded the Congregation of the Mission, a society of priests commonly known as the Vincentians. In 1633, with the assistance of Louise de Marillac he founded the Daughters of Charity. He also fought against the Jansenist heresy.

ST. FRANCIS OF SALES
(1567-1622)

Founder of the Order of the Visitation with St. Frances De Chantal. He is a Doctor of the Church and patron of the Catholic press. He was the writer of the spiritual classics—Introduction to the Devout Life *and* Treatise on the Love of God, *stressing that sanctity is possible in everyday life.*

"To practice humility it is absolutely necessary for us at times to suffer wounds in this spiritual warfare, but we are never vanquished unless we lose our life or our courage" (St. Francis de Sales).

The knight of the Lord, like the medieval knight, has the virtue of courage.

"You have aroused the fierce beast; but do not fear. You have received a greater power, a sharper sword. Pierce the serpent with it" (St. John Chrysostom).

"God suffers the demon to rage against you that you may learn by trial the force of your strength" (St. John Chrysostom).

"Great courage is required in spiritual warfare" (St. Teresa of Avila).

The knight knows that giving in to emotional fear means that he does

not have faith in the power and providence of God. Fear is the contrary of faith.

"Fear is a greater evil than the evil itself" (St. Francis de Sales).

He also knows that the devil can read fear (and lack of faith) in his countenance which makes the devil bolder. He therefore squashes fear by using faith immediately when it rises in his heart.

"These enemies do not have the courage to assail any but those whom they see ready to give in to them" (St. Teresa of Avila).

"Let us rush with joy and trepidation to the noble contest and with no fear of our enemies. They are invisible enemies, but they can see the condition of our soul. If they see our spirits cowering and trembling, they will make a more vigorous attack against us. Let us arm ourselves against them with courage. They hesitate to grapple with a bold fighter" (St. John Climacus).

"I realize so clearly now how little power the devils have, if I am not fighting against God, that I am hardly afraid of them at all: for their strength is nothing unless they find souls surrendering to them, growing cowardly, in which case they do indeed show their power" (St. Teresa of Avila).

"They seem to me such cowards (demons), as soon as they see that anyone despises them they have no strength left" (St. Teresa of Avila).

He knows that having courage pleases God because it manifests trust and confidence in the love and power of the Father. Imagine how an earthly father would feel if his son or daughter doubted his care and protection.

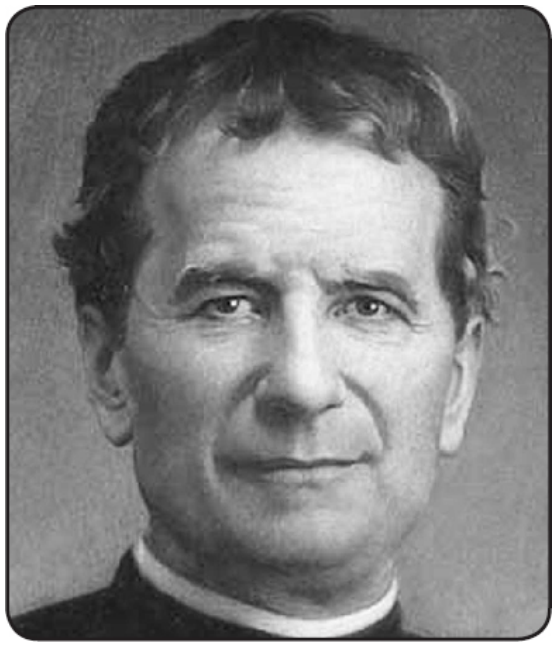
"We do not fear the devil or his demons, because the one who fights with us is so much greater than they" (St. Cyril of Jerusalem).

Now, a medieval knight aside from having body armor in which to defend himself had weapons in which to attack his enemies: swords, lances, axes, and the like. A spiritual knight has his spiritual weapons that are divine in nature since they have been given to him by God himself to demolish preternatural strongholds and put to flight the devil and his demons. He uses these weapons also to retake the world and

souls for God.

The greatest weapon he has is Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

"Lucifer and his demons have such a fear of the most Holy Eucharist, that to approach it causes them more torments than to remain in hell itself. Although they do enter churches in order to tempt souls, they enter them with aversion, forcing themselves to endure cruel pains in the hope of destroying a soul and drawing it into sin, especially in holy places and in the presence of the Holy Eucharist. Nothing except their furious hatred of the Lord and against souls could ever induce them to expose themselves to the torments of his real sacramental presence… Whenever he (Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament) is carried through the streets (as in processions), they (demons) usually fly and disperse in all haste" (Venerable Mary of Agreda).



ST. JOHN BOSCO
(1815-1888)

Founder of the Society of St. Francis de Sales (Salesians of Don Bosco), the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians or the Salesian Sisters (with St. Mary Mazzarello as Co-Founder), and a movement of the laity, the Salesian Cooperators, all of which are dedicated to the betterment and education of poor youngsters.

"My dear ones, the visit to the Blessed Sacrament is an extremely necessary way to conquer the devil. Therefore, go often to visit Jesus and the devil will not come out victorious against you" (St. John Bosco).

"Endeavor not to miss any Holy Communion. We can scarcely give our enemy, the devil, any greater joy than when we withdraw from Jesus, who takes away the power the enemy has over us" (St. Margaret Mary Alacoque of the Sacred Heart).

"The Sacrament of the Body of the Lord puts the demons to flight" (St. Thomas Aquinas).

"Do you want the devil to attack you? Visit Jesus rarely in the Blessed Sacrament. Do you want him to flee from you? Visit Jesus often. Do you want to conquer the devil? Take refuge often at the feet of Jesus. Do you want to be conquered by the devil? Forget about visiting Jesus" (St. John Bosco).

"When you are before the altar where Christ reposes, you ought no longer to think that you are among men; but believe that there are troops of angels and archangels standing by you, and trembling with respect before the sovereign Master of heaven and earth. Therefore, when you are in a church, be there in silence, fear, and veneration" (St. John Chrysostom).

The other powerful weapons that we have are the name of Jesus and the sign of the cross.

Going first to the name of the Lord is especially effective when used in prayers of deliverance or simple exorcisms.

"Do not fear; Jesus is more powerful than all hell. At the invocation of his name every knee in heaven, on earth, and in hell must bend before Jesus; this is the consolation of the good and terror of the evil ones" (St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina).

"We are able to adjure the demons by the power of the name of Jesus, expelling them from ourselves as declared enemies, in order to avoid the spiritual and corporal damage that could come to us from them. This is a power which is given to us from Christ, himself" (St. Thomas Aquinas).

"We, Christians, by merely pronouncing the name of Jesus crucified, drive away those demons whom you worship as gods. Their charms and their influence lose all their power wherever the sign of the cross is formed" (St. Anthony of the Desert).

Focusing now on the sign of the cross, a spiritual knight frequently makes the sign of the cross over himself (he does it properly and

solemnly, sometimes with holy water and not in a hidden nor hurried manner) and over those he loves. Parents should never forget that they have a powerful spiritual authority over their children; this is part of the graces that they received in the sacrament of Matrimony. We had cases in our office where young children were freed not only from extraordinary demonic attacks of oppression but even possession after their parents were instructed to trace the sign of the cross on their foreheads every night. This is done with holy water and while the parent is tracing the cross on the forehead, he prays from his heart to God that his blessings and protection descend upon the child.

"Seal the cross openly on your forehead and on your children's, so that the demons, seeing the royal sign, will tremble and flee" (St. Cyril of Jerusalem).

"By the sign of the cross all magic ceases; all incantations are powerless; every idol is abandoned and deserted; all irrational voluptuousness is quelled and each one looks up from earth to heaven" (St. Athanasius).

"Men can use no better arms to drive away the devil than prayer and the sign of the cross" (St. Teresa of Avila).

"He who, when tempted, makes the sign of the cross with devotion makes hell tremble and heaven rejoice" (St. Jean Marie Vianney).

Aside from the above, the spiritual knight is an expert on the different sacramentals of the Church and on how to use them properly. Sacramentals are like the many different types of weapons of a medieval knight that allow him to adapt to the different types of enemies and scenarios in any given battlefield. Some examples of sacramentals are the following: holy water, holy oil, the Exorcism Cross (a normal crucifix with the St. Benedict's Medal in the center), relics of the saints, exorcised salt, blessed religious medals (like the St. Benedict's medal which is known for its effectiveness against curses and hexes, and the Miraculous Medal of Mama Mary), the rosary, the scapular, blessed candles, blessed incense, holy cards (especially those depicting the archenemy of Satan, St. Michael), and the blessed statues of the saints. The greatest of the sacramentals against extraordinary demonic bondage is, of course, solemn exorcism, which can only be performed by bishops, or priests delegated by them.

"The Church participates in the victory of Christ over the Devil: Christ gave

his disciples the power to expel demons. The Church exercises this victorious power through faith in Christ and prayer, which in specific cases can take the form of exorcism" (Blessed Pope John Paul II).

The final point that will be discussed but is rarely studied when one is engaged in spiritual warfare is discernment, because the devil is the greatest of liars and deceivers as well as the vilest of murderers.

"The devil often transforms himself into an angel to tempt men, some for their instruction and some for their ruin" (St. Augustine).

"Those spirits are deceivers, not by nature, but by malice. They make themselves gods and souls of the departed, but they do not make themselves devils, for they are really so" (St. Augustine).

"The enemy cares not whether what he says is true or false, but only whether he conquers us" (St. Ignatius of Loyola).

"The devil flatters that he may deceive us; he charms that he may injure us; he allures that he may slay us" (St. John Climacus).

The spiritual knight practices discernment by knowing very well the Church's teachings and traditions (prayer, spiritual warfare, discernment, etc.) as well as being faithful in following her guidance. For example, when he reads the Bible and desires to interpret the texts properly, he should always use Catholic commentaries to allow him to understand their proper meaning; he should be very careful about using Protestant teachings (they do not have the fullness of the truth and traditions which started with the Apostles nor the infallibility handed down by Christ). He must also constantly read the lives of saints to learn how they dealt with the world of the spirits, as well as how they fought the spiritual war, and emerged victorious. From these readings he discovers how to detect and how to escape the different deceits of the devil.

To conclude, the knight of Christ does battle in order to attain peace, not the peace of the world but the peace and joy that can only come from the heart of God.

"The peace of Jesus is the fruit of a constant struggle against evil. The battle that Jesus has decided to fight is not against men or human powers but against the enemy of God and man, Satan" (Pope Benedict XVI).

“If we are at war with the devil, we are at peace with God” (St. John Chrysostom).

PART III

ANGELS AND DEMONS

CHAPTER XI

A Short Treatise on the Angels

I was once riding with my sister-in-law Joan on her way to pick up her eldest son, Jas (Jose Antonio Syquia), from his elementary school at Don Bosco Makati (a very good Catholic school for young boys). She then related to me this personal and fascinating story about guardian angels. She was once asked to pick up her niece after school from the nearby San Agustin College, Makati. The problem was she forgot to ask for the pickup time and place. So while she was driving her van towards the school, she prayed from her heart to her guardian angel to please tell her niece's guardian angel to tell her to be at a particular spot that she knew in the school, a few minutes from that time. Now that was faith! When she arrived at the spot, sure enough, there was her young and bubbly niece waiting patiently. As Joan opened the door of the van to let her niece in, she asked her why she chose that precise spot to wait for her and at that specific time. Her niece very matter-of-factly (children do have faith) said that while she was playing in the schoolyard, her guardian angel told her to run to that precise spot because she was about to be picked up. What a great friend we have in our guardian angels! It is just sad that too few of us ever speak to them or even remember their existence.

"Make friends with the angels who, though invisible, are always with you. Often invoke them, constantly praise them, and make good use of their help and assistance in all your temporal and spiritual affairs" (St. Francis de Sales).

Who and what are the angels? According to the *Catechism of the*

Catholic Church, "Angels are spiritual creatures who glorify God without ceasing and who serve his saving plans for other creatures." We use the term "choirs of angels" because they unceasingly sing praises to God in heaven.

They are our very powerful heavenly allies in the spiritual war now raging on this earth for souls. The former war in heaven where the fallen angels were defeated and cast out is brought down to our planet.

Belief in the existence of angels is a dogma of our Faith. Just reading the Bible, one is struck at the many instances where they are mentioned (thousands of times). If a Catholic therefore chooses not to believe in their existence, he would be rightly called a heretic.

Now, angels are pure spirits which means that they have no material bodies like man. But as spirits, they have the spiritual faculties which are also found in man: intelligence and free will.

And because they do not have the limitations of a material body, their intellect and will are much more superior to ours. At one glance, they can know reality and science instantly and do not make mistakes. Their will is also irrevocable because when they choose, they choose with an intensity and clarity that cannot change. This is the reason why a fallen angel will never ask forgiveness from God.

Heaven is the home of the angels so they always see the face of God although they also minister to us. St. Thomas tells us that "the angel is the most excellent of all creatures because among all creatures he bears the greatest resemblance to his Creator"; they are purely spiritual beings like God. Man, on the other hand, is made up of body and spirit. So, angels are of a higher nature than that of man.

"Thou hast made him a little less than the angels" (Ps 8:6, Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible).

They love us because we are made in the image and likeness of God; and also because we are the children of God and will in due time live with them in heaven. They also love whatever God loves; hence since God loves us infinitely, their love for us is truly great!

The term angel comes from the Greek word *angelos*, meaning "messenger." They are therefore emissaries sent by God from heaven to guide and protect us from all forms of danger and inspire us with thoughts and desires that are holy. They also offer our prayers, sufferings, and good works to God as well as intercede and pray for us day and night.

Now, one may ask how many are the angels of God? In the book of Daniel (7:10), we read, *"Thousands upon thousands were ministering to him, and myriads upon myriads attended him"* and in Rv 5:11 we read, *"I*

looked again and heard the voices of many angels who surrounded the throne… They were countless in number."

These verses point to the fact that the number of the angels is beyond counting! What a great host of allies we have who love us with such divine intensity that we would never be able to imagine it.

Sadly, so few of us call on them for help; here in the Philippines, we are more used to calling upon and interacting with the fallen angels thrown down to earth (they usually take the form of elementals, aliens, ancestral spirits, spirit guides, ascended masters, and the like).

Angels intervene in our lives but are rarely seen. God mentioned the reason to St. Bridget why angels and saints are not usually seen in this life: "They would be honored as I myself; and then, too, faith would have no merit… that all honor may be shown to me and that man may know that no one is to be loved above me."

We see this is what happened to St. John in the book of Revelation. In Rv 22:8-9 we note the following encounter between the saint and an angel: *"It is I, John, who heard and saw these things, and when I heard and saw them I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me. But he said to me, 'Don't! I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brothers the prophets and of those who keep the message of this book. Worship God.' "*

So generally, angels do not allow themselves to be seen because man would tend to worship them. Fallen angels, on the other hand, try as much as possible to be seen and heard by man in order for them to be worshipped. Idolatry (paganism/animism) is the offshoot of this.

Now, not only do we have the whole host of heaven on our side, each of us has our own particular guardian angel.

"An angel is put in charge of every believer, provided we do not drive him out by sin. He guards the soul like an army does" (St. Basil the Great).

"When tempted, invoke your angel. Ignore the devil and do not be afraid of him; he trembles and flees at your guardian angel's sight" (St. John Bosco).

"Jesus has not left me alone; he makes my guardian angel stay with me always" (St. Gemma Galgani).

"We should pray to the angel who is given to us as guardian" (St. Ambrose).

We must remember that each angel is a different person; hence our guardian angel is a one-of-a-kind friend who loves us and will journey with us while we are alive.

ST. GEMMA GALGANI
(1878-1903)

An Italian mystic. She has been called the "Daughter of Passion" because of her profound imitation of the Passion of Christ. She was favored with extraordinary graces and with heavenly revelations.

They would bring us to meet Jesus when we die and would even be with us, interceding and consoling us, if ever we are sent for expiation to purgatory. It is therefore very consoling to know that even when we feel most alone, we are never so in actuality.

"Our guardian angels are our most faithful friends, because they are with us day and night, always and everywhere. We ought often to invoke them… What joy it is to know that when we go out of the house, we are never alone en route" (St. Jean Marie Vianney).

When St. Padre Pio was still alive, people would ask their guardian angels to go to him for particular favors so much so that he stated, "Those guardian angels didn't let me sleep a moment last night."

So, how should we relate with the angels, especially our guardian angel?

First, we can do this by frequently calling on them for help, especially for their guidance and protection. They are very happy to help us, not

only in spiritual difficulties but even in our day-to-day tasks and problems. When I forget something important, I pray from the heart to my guardian angel for help and then I immediately remember the important task.

Second, let us converse with them frequently during the day as with a friend; they are overjoyed at this. They communicate with us by enlightening our minds with beautiful and pure thoughts as well as inspiring our hearts with peaceful and consoling emotions.

Third, let us thank them in prayer for their continuous watchful care for us. They warn us of dangers, again through our feelings and thoughts, as well as inspire us to goodness. A way to show our gratitude is to follow with love these inspirations that they give us. For example, when there is someone in need and they inspire us to aid that person, let us immediately do so.

Lastly, we give them joy when we join them in glorifying God through active participation in the sacraments such as the Mass and in living a pure and holy life.

The angels of God! What great companions we truly have! In my ministry of exorcism for the Archdiocese of Manila, I see very clearly their willingness to come always to our aid quickly when we ask them for help. For example, during a difficult exorcism session, I called with my mind for the aid of St. Michael, and the demons in the possessed immediately screamed in fear. So we should never fear demons!

Additionally, we should never fear demons since the good angels are twice the number of the fallen ones. Also they are not only more, they are also more powerful since not only do they have preternatural powers like that of the fallen angels but they also have supernatural powers due to the grace that is in them. So if the devil and his followers hate us greatly, the angels, on the other hand, love us and desire to protect us even more greatly and can do so with the power of almighty God. How much they love us and desire that we join them in heaven after the war!

Before we conclude, I would like to say a few words about St. Michael, the head of the heavenly hosts battling the devil and his minions on this earth. First, the devil hates him so much because he replaced the position of Lucifer as the greatest of the angels. Our Catholic tradition tells us that although St. Michael is a mere archangel (Note: the nine Choirs of angels from the most powerful—Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, Angels) compared to Lucifer who was a seraphim, St. Michael attained highest merit in glorifying God during the battle in heaven that he was placed as head of the heavenly hosts (“the first shall be last and the last shall be first”). That is the reason why the devil hates this angel so much; from a seemingly lowly place, he rose to the

heights of holiness. St. Michael, whose name means “Who is as God?,” destroyed the devil’s pride who desired to be like God. From a low order by nature, St. Michael’s outstanding zeal for God’s glory and the salvation of his fellow angels during Satan’s rebellion merited him glory and power as to even excel through grace the higher choirs, becoming the prince of the heavenly hosts. This we see also in Mama Mary, she is lower than the angels by her nature as a human being but is their queen due to the fullness of grace in her soul. Let us therefore always remember St. Michael whom God has given to us to be our general in the war on this earth for souls, knowing full well that as he led and triumphed over the fallen angels in heaven, we shall also triumph with, and the whole heavenly hosts by our side, our battle on this earth. He is the patron saint of our office (AMOE) and his protection and care for us who work in the office is unimaginable. To honor and make him happy, we can do the following things: have blessed pictures of him, pray the prayer to him (St. Michael Prayer) from the heart, call on him during times of temptation and when being assaulted by the devil, and talk to him regularly.

“May prayer strengthen us for the spiritual battle we are told about in the letter to the Ephesians: ‘Draw strength from the Lord and from his mighty power.’ The book of Revelation refers to this same battle, recalling before our eyes the image of St. Michael the Archangel. Pope Leo XIII certainly had a very vivid recollection of this scene when, at the end of the last century, he introduced a special prayer to St. Michael throughout the Church. Although this prayer is no longer recited at the end of the Mass, I ask everyone not to forget it and recite it to obtain help in the battle against forces of darkness and against the spirit of this world” (Blessed Pope John Paul II).

So, may this prayer be recited frequently by our lips:

Angel of God, my guardian dear,
to whom his love commits me here.
Ever this day, be at my side,
to light and guard,
to rule and guide.
Amen.

Some words of wisdom from St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina on the guardian angels:

“For pity’s sake, don’t forget this invisible companion, always present,

always ready to listen to us, and even more ready to console us."

"How consoling it is to know one is always under the protection of a heavenly spirit who never abandons us. Who is to be feared when accompanied by such an illustrious warrior? Was he not, perhaps, one of the multitude who joined with St. Michael in the heavens to defend God's honor against Satan and against all the other rebellious angels, to vanquish them in the end and drive them down to hell? Well, then, let me tell you that your guardian angel is still powerful against Satan and all his evil satellites."

"Never forget your guardian angel who is always close to you, who never leaves you, no matter how badly you treat him. O unspeakable excellence of this good angel of ours!"

"Oh, he [your angel] is so considerate and so sensitive… How dear he is and how good."

"Have great devotion to this good angel. How consoling it is to know that near us is a spirit who, from the cradle to the tomb, does not leave us even from an instant, not even when we dare to sin. And this heavenly spirit guides and protects us like a friend, a brother."

"It is consoling to know that this angel prays without ceasing for us; he offers to God all our good actions, thoughts, desires, if they are pure."

"If all people could only understand and appreciate the great gift God in his exceeding love has given us by appointing this heavenly spirit to guide us."

"When it seems to you that you are alone and abandoned, don't complain that you are without a friend to whom you can open your heart and confide your woes. For goodness sake, don't forget this invisible companion who is always there to listen to you, always ready to console you."

"The fact that we have close to us an angelic spirit who never leaves us for an instant… must really fill us with consolation especially in our most dreary moments."

"What a consolation will be yours when, at the hour of death, you will behold this good angel who accompanied you during life and was so generous in his motherly care for you. Oh, may this delightful thought make you increasingly fond of Jesus' cross, as this is also the wish of

your good angel."

ST. PADRE PIO OF PIETRELCINA
(1887-1968)

A Capuchin priest from Italy. He was popularly known as Padre Pio after his ordination to the priesthood. He became famous for his stigmata. He battled demons and could see souls from purgatory seeking prayers.

CHAPTER XII

Demonology 1

The young boy, let's call him Mike, was very sensitive to the spirit world since he was a child. He was what one may call, psychic. He was around eight years old, of light brown complexion, and a bit thin. He was a very bright student and well-loved by his teachers. At home, he was respectful and obedient not only to his parents but also to his older brothers and sisters. He was studying in a public school when the events that follow occurred.

Although he was a baptized Catholic, he was not really religious, hence spiritually he was quite vulnerable to the preternatural world. He was fascinated with the occult due to his being sensitive and this added to his spiritual vulnerability. No one had taught him that the occult was dangerous.

It all started when the school he was studying in decided to build an adjoining wing to the main building. His school was located in the outskirts of the city, built on what used to be a forested area. It was made up of a central light-colored wooden structure with a few small concrete buildings around it. When construction started with the cutting down of the old and large trees in the vicinity, Mike started to sense a very negative reaction in the atmosphere. The fallen angels that were attached to these very old trees (territorial spirits/ elementals) retaliated against him since he was around (and was sensitive to them) when the cutting down of the trees occurred.

In paganism, animist man would offer some form of appeasement like blood offerings or food and drink to the "elementals" so that no retaliatory action would occur. In my work in the Office of Exorcism, I have heard countless stories of some form of retaliation (usually accidents or some form of physical sickness that cannot be healed by medicine) by the fallen spirits in nature when, for example, workers (not in the state of grace) start tampering with the environment in order to renovate, construct, or build something. What must be done

when this happens is to go to a priest so that the fallen angels in these areas are cast out through the use of deliverance prayers and the sacramentals. Never offer any kind of appeasement, for this is idolatry (adoration to the devil and his demons) and this is actually a consecration of the place to these fallen angels. Early Christians always exorcised and then blest all their possessions including their animals and areas of work. If anyone becomes a victim of retaliation from these so-called "elementals," he must seek assistance from the Church and not from an occult practitioner so that the evil spirits causing the retaliation are cast out, not appeased.

Mike then started to not only see a lot of paranormal activities in the area around the construction site like black figures flitting around the place, he also started to experience a sort of takeover of his body which became more and more powerful as time went on. It would usually begin with his limbs which would move on their own and then this "force" would start to affect the other parts of his body; later on, when his whole body was taken over, he would start to scream and become physically violent. By that time, Mike would lose all sense of what was happening to him. The only positive thing in all this was that these terrifying episodes would usually last only a few minutes a day. But the teachers and schoolmates were frightened by such displays and the principal would immediately call his parents to pick him up to bring him home after these attacks.

The sad thing was that, after a few days of successive "attacks," he was brought by his parents to a spiritist group for help whose members then started using psychic energy and magick on him. After a week with the spiritist group, Mike had become totally possessed. And his possessed state would this time last for hours on end.

When the parents saw with horror and desperation how Mike was getting worse, they got him out from the clutches of the spiritist group and brought him home and he immediately became possessed.

After many hours Mike had not yet come out of his possessed state, also called a "state of crisis," the distraught parents, then and only then, thought of seeking assistance from the Church. Calling the Archdiocese of Manila Office of Exorcism, they frantically asked for help, saying on the phone that their son had been possessed for almost the whole day that time: he was continually screaming and very violent. The other members of the family were either restraining the boy or praying the rosary around him. After an initial interview, to diagnose properly the case, an exorcism was planned in a church in Quezon City.

The exorcist arrived with only one lay assistant, for there was no time to get a team together. As the exorcist arrived in the designated

church before the possessed boy, he waited quietly in one dark corner, preparing mentally and, most especially, spiritually for what was to come. He had on him a violet stole around his neck and clutched his small bag that had a few sacramentals. He was not afraid, only a bit tense, knowing that each case of possession was unique and had its own challenges; sometimes the demon would try to harass the exorcist with threatening words and frightening facial gestures; sometimes the demon would use violent physical force to disrupt the proceedings; and sometimes it would cause the possessed simply to fall into a sort of deep sleep. Each demon has its own unique personality and weak spot, and reacts to an exorcism in its own distinctive manner. In a short while, the exorcist heard the arrival of the group bringing with them the possessed boy. Mike suddenly became sullen and very quiet upon entering the church. As the exorcist observed Mike, there seemed to be a very dark shadow over him and there was an eerie sort of negative power to his silent demeanor.

The thin possessed boy was then placed near the exorcist, who was then standing. The demon manifested itself in a very violent rage. The companions, including a policeman who was called to help, tried their best to restrain the boy, struggling with the thrashing arms and powerful kicks.

As the exorcist brought out the small container of the exorcised oil and started anointing the different parts of the boy's convulsing body, the demon in the boy started to scream violently in protest, "It stinks! It stinks! I'm burning! I'm burning!" Threats also issued from the lips of the possessed boy, "I will get back at you! I will get back at you!" The exorcist, with full trust in the protection and power of God, gazed fearlessly into the eyes of the possessed (knowing that the eyes are the windows to whatever consciousness had taken over the boy) and started commanding with the full authority of Christ. The demon lost courage and tried with all its might to turn away from the probing eyes of the exorcist; the boy's eyes as well as his whole head started turning wildly around and around.

Suddenly, the words that came out of the possessed boy seemed to say that the demons had already left and that he was free once again. But the exorcist did not easily believe this since previous cases had shown that this was a tactic of the demons to stop the session. The exorcist did a simple test; he told the demoniac, "Repeat after me, I love you, Jesus!" As the possessed began to repeat the words, all was fine until he had to say the name "Jesus." The possessed stammered and couldn't pronounce the sacred name of our Lord; the demon then began snarling and violence again erupted.

Mike's body became again a plaything of the demons: kicking,

punching, and convulsing violently. The exorcist then began again to apply more exorcised oil, knowing that these particular demons hated it. Surprisingly, after a few minutes of applying more and more of the sacred oil to the different parts of the possessed, the demons had enough of the torture and took their leave. After some tests done on Mike, the exorcist was this time certain that Mike's consciousness had returned and the boy had been liberated. Mike was back, smiling and calm, although quite drained since he had been possessed for almost an entire day. But the power of God's love for Mike was seen by the fact that it only took around 15 minutes to exorcise him. As the exorcist spoke to Mike, he noticed how gentle and respectful the boy was; he consoled the boy and gave him some spiritual advice. The parents were then given certain spiritual guidance and even assignments to make sure that this sad state of affairs does not repeat itself.

After a few days, Mike has returned totally to his old self and returned to his school. The entire family has become closer to God. Years have now passed with no recurrence of the demonic bondage and Mike has matured to become a fine teenager.[36]

The name Satan comes from the Hebrew word *ha-Satan*, meaning "adversary," while the name Devil is derived from the Greek word *diavolos*, meaning "the one who hampers or the one who divides." The term "devil" is especially applied to the chief of the rebellious angels, while the term "demon" is applied to his followers or the rest of the fallen angels. The sin of the devil that caused his downfall is seen through his words to our first parents, *"You will become like God"* (Gn 3:5). This is the sin of pride which was the cause of his rebellion against God.

Satan hates God because in jealousy he is not God. He did not accept that obedient humility towards God who would have led him to a relationship of infinite love and joy with him. The devil does not tolerate that there is a God above him; if he could eliminate God, he would do it. But not being able to do it, Satan fights God with all his might. So the devil knows that God is God and that he is just a creature; he is conscious of it but he does not accept it.

The devil is who he is because *"he has not persevered in the truth"* (Jn 8:44) of who God is and who he is without God.

St. Thomas said that the devil desired to be like God and to participate in his beatitude, not through a gift of grace, but rather by taking it with his own natural power. Being jealous of God, Satan wanted to obtain the splendor of divinity, not receiving it with obedient humility, but stealing it with presumptuous pride.

Reading the Bible, we get to know the different characteristics of this ancient enemy and we can therefore become watchful for the tactics he may use against us which flows from his character. He is the father of lies (Jn 8:44) and *"disguises himself as an angel of light"* (2 Cor 11:14); thus we are always careful when it comes to discernment and we must avail of the means taught to us by the saints like St. Ignatius of Loyola. We do not believe in something just because it seems good on the outside or just because we attain certain benefits from it. In our office (AMOE), many come to us who were deceived because they have easily attributed extraordinary phenomena to God and so delved into occultism/esotericism because they judge its goodness or evilness by the benefits that they can gain from it, be it healing, "good luck," knowledge of the future, temporal benefits, and the like. We must remember that the devil will never show his true face until it is too late; he will manifest always as a seeming good.

ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA
(1491-1556)

A Spanish knight from a Basque noble family. Founder of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) and was its first Superior General. He wrote the Spiritual Exercises *which was highly recommended by Pius XI. He is the patron of retreats and spiritual exercises.*

He spreads false teachings (1 Tm 4:1); this should make us study

continuously the teachings of our Church and be faithful to these teachings so we are not led astray. For example, the Gnostic heresy of the early centuries is infiltrating again the Church of today through the New Age Movement. Let us continually learn, listen, and be faithful to what the Pope and the bishops teach us regarding faith and life.

The devil is a thief (Jn 10:1) who desires to steal the countless gifts of God to us especially the gifts of grace and heaven. Let us for that reason always protect with utmost watchfulness the gift of grace in our souls and continually keep all our energies and time focused on attaining the only real goal of life which is heaven.

The devil desires that while we are alive, we do not experience the fullness of God's gifts (Lk 8:12), hence he brings man to seek first in his necessity the world, instead of trusting in Jesus' exhortation that if we seek God first, all else will be given to us. In our office, we constantly see that when people learn to really put God as center of their lives and not on the peripheral, his blessings that encompass from the spiritual to the temporal enter into the lives of these people.

The devil wages war against the entire humankind (Rv 12:17) and the images used for the devil in the Bible depict this very clearly: he is called a dragon (ferocious), a serpent (shrewd), and a lion (a hunter of souls). Complacency in one's spiritual life is therefore never an option for the friends of God. There is the presence always of an enemy watching our every move and reaction in life, continually searching for opportunities and openings to attack.

Satan is a murderer (Jn 8:44) especially because his main objective against us is to destroy the presence of the Holy Spirit in our souls through sin. We see especially today how he makes us believe that being in the state of mortal sin is of no or of minor consequence only; he also tries to delude us by destroying the sense of sin in us. He warps man's conscience so that he is not able to distinguish anymore the good from the bad. We have countless examples of this today where grave sin and evil are not anymore seen as such; pornography is now seen as art, "living in" is now an acceptable lifestyle, abortion is not seen as murder but a right of the parents, and so on and so forth.

Again as Catholics, we must always remember that sin is the greatest block to the love and blessings of God. Also the devil has successfully deluded many Christians, so that they consider the world and its pleasures as more important than thoughts of holiness and heaven. It would be good to ask ourselves from time to time: "How much time and energy do I spend each day in worldly pursuits vis-à-vis spiritual goals?" "What would be the proportion with regard to time and energy spent between the two?"

The devil tempts man with the world of the occult since he displays

his power in the darkness of idolatry (Acts 26:18; Col 1:13). He draws man to esoteric and occult practices where there is the promise of power so that man may not seek God and discover his infinite care and concern for us plus all the blessings and gifts that he has prepared for us. He also uses paganism/animism found in the New Age Movement and folk religiosity to draw man to worship him, for he desires to be like God. We see a clear example of this in his boldness to tempt even God himself: *"All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me." But the Lord rebuked him saying, "Get away, Satan! It is written, 'The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve' "* (Mt 4:8-10). We see here the insatiable thirst and inextinguishable torment of the devil to be adored. Idolatry is the offshoot in human history of man believing the devil and bowing down to him.

Now, if the devil is unsuccessful in blocking the blessings of God, he does his best to keep us from seeing that it is from God so that one does not become grateful to God. It is sad that when good things happen to us, we tend to see these as either coming from our own efforts or even from "good luck," and when problems and difficulties arise in our lives, we tend to blame God, not knowing that these come from sin, the world, our own mistakes, and from the devil. We, as Catholics, should not even believe in luck, whether good or bad since all events are under the providence of God: either under his active will (when he gives us good things) or his permissive will (when he allows an evil borne out of man's freedom or the devil's action to bring about a greater good for those who love him).

Finally, the devil is also an expert in using the worldly mentality of materialism, hedonism, atheism, and the like to make us forget God and renounce the Gospel values, hence he is called the prince of this world (Jn 12:31).

Now, because of the sin of Lucifer and his companion angels, they were thrown down from heaven by St. Michael and the heavenly hosts and have now become perpetual enemies of God condemned to eternal punishment. Their choice against God, done with full knowledge and malice, is irrevocable and immutable, hence they would never ask forgiveness from God. The fallen angels knew the full consequences of their rebellion against God and still they chose to rebel; they would rather experience the torments of separation from God than accept their being creatures. This rebellion shows us the greatness of their pride. It must be remembered that an angel, given its higher spiritual nature and intelligence than man, cannot make a subjective error when he makes a decision; for this reason he does not change his mind like a man does.

Now, hell which is both a place and a state reserved for the devil and

his followers is eternal; *"Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels"* (Mt 25:41). So there is no repentance for the angels after their fall, just as there is no repentance for men after their death (CCC 393).

Turning now to the preternatural powers of the fallen angels, evil spirits have retained their powers which are always superior to those of man due to the fact that they are totally spiritual beings, hence the psychic abilities of the fallen angels are powerful and can be used to psychically attack man (obsession, oppression, and possession). But although the fallen angels are superior (with preternatural powers) to human beings (with natural powers), they cannot perform true miracles (by supernatural or divine power) whose source is God.

But when the devil performs a feat of the preternatural order, it may appear to us, ordinary people, that the given manifestation is a miracle (divine/supernatural) because it surpasses human ability; we must therefore always be careful to discern properly all so-called mystical phenomena or else we would fall easily into the deceptions of the devil.

As Msgr. Balducci states: *"However superior to human beings, he (the devil) cannot transcend created nature. He cannot, for example, perform true miracles, because by definition a miracle is something that surpasses the power of all created nature. It requires supernatural power, and the devil's power is only "preternatural"… when the devil performs feats of the preternatural order, it may appear to some persons that the given phenomenon is a miracle, but such is not the case, it is simply something that far surpasses human power."*[37]

The well-known spiritual author, Jordan Aumann, OP in his classic work, *Spiritual Theology*, mentions a number of things a fallen angel can perform. According to him, with God's permission, the devil can do the following:

a) *Produce corporeal or imaginative visions,* hence the many false visionaries throughout the centuries. An example is that after Mama Mary appeared to St. Bernadette in Lourdes, there were 400 other apparitions around the area which were all false and demonic in origin.

b) *Falsify ecstasy;* that is, outwardly, the person may seem to be in mystical prayer with the outward manifestation of being in ecstasy but in reality the person is merely in a psychic trance state or an altered state of consciousness brought about by the intervention of the devil.

c) *Produce rays of light in the body and sensible heat.*

d) *Cause sensible consolations and tenderness,* hence even in prayer, St.

Ignatius tells us to discern the spirits. Some leave prayer proud and more obstinate because they experience sensible consolations that are not from God. What the devil cannot mimic are spiritual consolations. It would be good to ask oneself after prayer, "Am I more centered and in love with God and desire to do more for him or am I more focused on myself and my needs?" "Am I more humble and dependent on God seeking his will and not mine, trying to please him more or am I more self-conceited and self-righteous seeking more my plans and ambitions and what will fulfill me?" Check always the fruits of prayer to find the source of experiences encountered in it.

e) *Instantaneously cure sicknesses that have been caused by diabolical influence.* Like when a person is hurt by what occult persons term "elementals" which in reality are the fallen angels residing in nature and manifesting themselves in the form of weird types of animals or even small beings like dwarves; here a spiritist or faith healer can heal the malady caused by such "elementals." Of course, the more powerful fallen angel used by the practitioner for the healing has now a sort of ownership over the patient. In our office, we encounter so many persons who were hurt by these spirits; to be protected, one must always be in the state of grace, have faith in God's protection, and use the spiritual weapons found in the Church.

"First of all, they [the demons] make you ill; then to get a miracle out of it, they prescribe remedies either completely novel, or contrary to those in use, and thereupon withdrawing hurtful influence, they are supposed to have wrought a cure" (Tertullian).

f) *Produce the stigmata and all other kinds of bodily extraordinary phenomena, and any phenomena dealing with physical objects.* This is the reason why it takes the Church quite some time to discern and make pronouncements regarding extraordinary phenomena: Are the events truly supernatural or merely preternatural? And that is also why we, as Filipinos with a propensity to the extraordinary, should be more careful and prudent when we hear of some extraordinary occurrences; we should wait for the pronouncements from those tasked by the Church hierarchy to review such paranormal phenomena.

g) *Simulate miracles and the phenomena of levitation, bilocation, and compenetration of bodies.* The devil and his demons being pure

spirits have a certain power over all material things including the human body; hence just because a person is manifesting all kinds of phenomena beyond human capability and performs seemingly "miraculous" activities do not mean that the cause is divine nor the person, holy.

h) *Cause persons and objects to disappear from sight by placing an obstacle in the line of vision or acting directly on the sense of sight; simulate locutions (hearing voices) by means of sound waves or immediate action on the sense of hearing; cause a person to speak in tongues,* hence those in the charismatic movement must be especially watchful because this charism can be mimicked by the father of lies.

i) *Produce bodily incombustibility by interposing some medium between the fire and the body of the individual.*

The demons, according to Fr. Aumann OP, on the other hand, cannot do the following:

a) *Produce any kind of truly supernatural phenomena because supernatural by definition exceeds all natural created powers.*

b) *Create any substance because creation requires an infinite power, and no creature of any kind can be used even as an instrument of creation.* For example, in Lourdes, a person who had lost a bone in his arm had it miraculously replaced through the intercession of Mama Mary; this is a true miracle and can only be caused by God. But with regard to the creation of something from nothing, we must be careful that we are not deceived by evil spirits who can manipulate and move objects around in an astonishing fast rate (faster than the human eye can follow) that it may seem that these objects suddenly just appear (or disappear from a certain location). Evil spirits in haunted houses usually do this.

c) *Raise a dead person to life, although they could produce the illusion of doing so.* There are many saints who raised the dead back to life; just one example is the well-known miracle of St. Vincent Ferrer, OP who raised a dead body back to life to prove his prophetic warnings to the world. Fr. Aumann, OP mentions how the devil can imitate this type of miracle. But what he does is not to bring back the soul of the dead person (only God has that power) but merely to manipulate the dead body using his preternatural powers. For example, a host of demons enter into a newly deceased body through necromancy or demonic intent to make the

body seemingly come to life; hence the many stories throughout the centuries, substantiated even by the chronicles of monasteries, of the living dead.

d) *Instantaneously cure wounds, fractures, lesions, etc. because this is something only the Creator can do.* Only God can cure serious bodily injuries instantly.

e) *Make truly prophetic predictions, since the devil does not, by his own powers of intelligence, know future contingencies, although he knows so many things in their causes that it may appear to human beings that what was predicted was a true prophecy.* This is the reason why we must not be impressed by fortune-tellers using the occult; the evil spirits they consult will give information that are based on our habits, activities, character, and our environment. Remember that these spirits see all that we do and say, hence, for example, we make plans to go on a trip, they see this and relay this information to the fortune-teller or diviner. A person awed by the fortune-teller then begins to frequent going to have his fortune told; he is now caught in this deception and little by little he will have his life directed by an evil spirit. This is the reason why God is so strict with us regarding this occult practice!

Do not… consult fortune-tellers, for you will be defiled by them. I, the Lord, am your God" (Lv 19:31).

"Should anyone turn to… fortune-tellers and follow their wanton ways, I will turn against such a one and cut him off from his people" (Lv 20:6).

f) *Know the secrets of a person's mind and heart, since the devil does not by his own power have access to the human intellect and will. Because of his superior intelligence, however, he can conjecture much more easily and can know the temperament and character of individuals as well as the numerous circumstances of their life.* Only God can know the human heart. So it must be remembered that the devil cannot read our minds or know our intentions; he can only watch our emotions and actions to make a probable guess of what we are thinking or intending. But when we direct our thoughts to him, like, for example, when an exorcist commands using only his mind for the devil to depart from a person, the devil is able to receive this message of command. So also with regard to our guardian angels, we can communicate with them by directing our thoughts to them in prayer. It would be good to point out that if the devil

tempts someone, he watches carefully the effect on the emotions of the person; if he sees that the temptation is causing an effective reaction in the person, he will bombard the person with even more temptations. An advice against this tactic of the enemy is therefore to resist the temptation right away and overcome as quickly as one can, with the practice of the contrary virtue!

g) *Produce in human beings extraordinary phenomena of the purely intellectual or volitional type because he does not have free access to the human intellect and will.* God can touch man in his intellect and will directly. With regard to man's will, God can give in an instant an increase of a particular virtue in a person or God can give suddenly the grace to a person for him to overcome permanently a temptation that he has been struggling with. With regard to the intellect, the Lord can give an instantaneous knowledge in the spiritual life that would either take years to learn or be even beyond the human capacity to learn. We see this especially in the lives of the saints when they experience God in mystical prayer; there is not only an increase in virtue but also an instant increase in knowledge of God. In St. Thomas Aquinas we see an example of how God's grace builds on the human genius of a person.

To conclude this chapter, we now go to how demons look like? In the fifth book of revelations of St. Bridget of Sweden, one of the Church's great visionaries, God answered, "If their horrible deformity were seen as it now exists, a soul seeing this would go out of its mind at the very sight; the whole body would begin to quiver like a trembling man's; drained by fear, the heart would die; and the feet would not be strong enough to support the other limbs." This is so because there is not even a tinge of beauty left in the fallen angels; they are totally cut off from God, the source of all that is beautiful. The reality is that there is no beauty and harmony outside of God. Connected with this is the reality that the most beautiful creature or work of creation is not even a drop in the ocean compared to the beauty of God. God is Beauty itself and although today we know this mainly by faith, we will experience the fullness of this reality when God finally calls us to himself. Who can imagine the experience of this encounter when infinite Beauty and Love itself utter the words "I love you" and one experiences the infinite power of these words?

CHAPTER XIII

Demonology 2

The following accounts are true stories that I have experienced myself as well as stories that were shared to me by persons who were the main protagonists themselves. Where necessary, I have changed some details to protect the identity of the persons involved, and to facilitate the flow of the story.

Fr. John (not his real name) was an old Italian missionary who worked in one of the dioceses in the far north. He was very active in fighting for the rights of the poor so much so that he angered some of the corrupt politicians of the place where he did his apostolate. Fr. John's interventions for the poor became too much for one such corrupt government official that the latter hired an assassin or hitman to murder this zealous priest. It happened that one night while the priest was on his way to a meeting, he spotted the would-be assassin hiding behind a tree. The hitman, who was around 20 feet away, with his back to the priest, looking out from a different direction, and carrying a long-barreled M16 assault rifle, seemed to have mistaken the route that the priest would take to go to the meeting. Fr. John calmly and with full faith in the power and protection of God raised his hand to make a large sign of the cross. He commanded in an authoritative voice, "In the name of Jesus, I bind you!" Immediately, the rifle of the assassin fell to the ground! The priest then continued walking until he was in the line of sight of the astonished hitman. The would-be murderer bent down to grab his rifle but could not lift it off the ground no matter how much he tried; the gun seemed stuck to the dirt-covered ground! The priest continued walking until he entered the meeting place safe and sound. The assassin was never seen or heard of again and the priest was left untouched since then. Fr. John, who visited my office to commend me on my first book, related the story to me. May God always watch over you and deliver you from all your enemies, brother priest.

Sr. Mary (not her real name) was a well-known retreat master who gave retreats and recollections not only to the laity, but also to sisters and priests. Since she was also sought after as a spiritual guide, she was assigned to a retreat center that was built on the side of a mountain. One time she decided to use some sacramentals to facilitate the flow of a retreat. The group she was about to handle was a youth group who had difficulty giving their full attention and participation to the retreat talks. Some would usually be talking with their seatmates during the sessions, others would fall asleep while others would be physically present but with their minds wandering far away. Sr. Mary decided that on the day they were supposed to arrive, she'll place exorcised oil on each of the seats that would be used by the participants. She also placed blessed salt around the perimeters of the session hall. The group arrived with their priest-adviser and after bringing all their belongings to their rooms, they headed to the session hall for the first of a series of talks. Wonder of wonders, after the first talk, the priest-adviser approached Sr. Mary and said to her, "Sister, this is amazing! This is the first time that the entire group has been so quiet and attentive! Not one of them spoke during your talk; and not one of them fell asleep!" Sr. Mary just smiled knowingly. Years back, I used to go always to this retreat center and it was during one of my visits that Sr. Mary shared this story.

Sr. Teresa (not her real name) was an old sister who later in life was assigned as a school administrator. She was assigned to a particularly large school run by her congregation. The Sisters were experiencing problems with the workers. They were on strike due to some misunderstandings. But what was puzzling was that, although the issue was not that grave, no amount of negotiations broke the deadlock. Many months had already passed before Sr. Teresa was sent to help. When she learned about the long-standing deadlock, she knew that there may be dark forces that were aggravating the circumstances. She knew that evil spirits were always on the lookout for any kind of opening in a person or in a situation which they could aggravate. Sr. Teresa, after some time of praying and pondering on the situation, decided to bring out her old worn-out prayer pamphlet which included the famous prayer of Pope Leo against the fallen angels; it was a powerful deliverance prayer of the Church. One night, she went to the dark chapel within the grounds of the school and

prepared herself spiritually for what she was about to do. When she was ready, she then prayed the deliverance prayer with all the faith that she could muster; she authoritatively commanded all evil spirits to depart from the school. She said the prayer a few times and afterwards, she sat quietly in the chapel, confident that she would soon see some changes. A week later, the strike ended peacefully with all parties involved happy and contented. A year later, she was assigned to another school which also had a long-standing strike; she again used the deliverance prayer of Pope Leo and within a week, the strike again ended. The next year, she was sent to yet another school with the same problem: a seemingly unsolvable strike. (Was she seen by her superiors as some type of trouble shooter?) And here again, she brought out her old prayer pamphlet and lo and behold, the strike ended within the week. When I gave a seminar on spiritual warfare to the congregation of Sr. Teresa in one of their schools, she approached me during *merienda* time, sat beside me, and, like a grandmother, sweetly recounted to me the events that I have just narrated.

When I was in the US many years back, I remember watching a documentary film that made quite an impression on me. It had to do with a certain city in one of the countries in Latin America; it had a very serious drug problem. There were seven drug lords in a power struggle that had already lasted for many years. Every day, there were several drug-related killings that occurred which the police did not have the manpower, resources, and the will to put a stop to. It was so bad that the city seemed like a war zone where killings were a daily occurrence and everyone was in a state of fear. Each of the drug lords had hundreds of hired guns to enforce their devilish plans as well as to protect their assets from rival drug lords. But with the grace of God, a point in time arrived where a group of Christians decided to do something about the hopeless and continually deteriorating situation. They contacted all the other Christian groups and communities and staged a large prayer rally in a large open-air football field. The entire day was spent praising God (they were charismatic groups and communities) and praying deliverance prayers against the forces of evil in the city. The next day there was not a single murder reported! And the following days, the same thing occurred; the killings between the rival drug syndicates and the deaths of innocent bystanders caught in the crossfire suddenly ceased all at once. What was also astonishing was the fact that within a year, all but one of the drug lords landed in jail.

“So submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you” (Jas 4:7-8a).

Reading the Bible, we see that the devil is the main antagonist of salvation history; he is found in the beginning of the Bible until its very end. In Gn 3:15 we read, *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”* While in the book of Revelation (12:1-9) we read about the huge red dragon, the woman clothed with the sun, and the battle in heaven. A point worth remembering is that as we see the appearance of the devil from the beginning of Sacred Scriptures till its end, we also notice the presence of Mama Mary from beginning to the end. She is truly our Mother given to us by God for this spiritual war. Mama Mary is the only creature on whom Satan has not exercised even for an instant his right of conquest; this means that Satan has never been able to claim any right over her. As the Immaculate Conception, she has always been completely and solely of God.

Focusing now on the New Testament, we have to realize that the victory of Christ over Satan is at the very heart of the Gospel; Christ came to destroy the works of the devil. We, too, are called to do battle with this ancient enemy who, although defeated, tries to sow as much mayhem and destruction till the return of the Lord and the final judgment since he knows that his time is short.

“I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one” (Jn 17:15).

God allows the devil and his demons to act until the end of the world to associate the Church and every Christian with the combat and victory of Christ. We should never underestimate the tactics and strategies of the devil since our first parents had grace, wisdom, and strength of God when they fell.

Ordinary Attacks of the Devil

The greatest danger from the devil is when he tempts us to sin since it has eternal consequences. If we die in the state of mortal sin, we would be totally under the power of Satan. Being in the state of mortal sin is therefore a sign of dominion or seal of the devil over a person. Hence St. John the evangelist calls someone in the state of sin, a son of the devil.

Every sin, even though confessed, leaves a mark on the person that would require more effort and grace to totally obliterate on the psyche

of the person, hence we must never underestimate the effects of continually falling into sin no matter how small. That is why a person who has lived a sinful lifestyle or addiction for some time, even though his sins may have been forgiven in the sacrament of Reconciliation, would have certain difficulties when it comes to resisting his previous sin. And the devil, knowing this vulnerability in the person, would naturally target this area again and again, knowing that the person needs more grace and zeal to successfully overcome the temptations attacking this area again. Like a physical wound that is continually reopened, the scar never heals and the area becomes a point of weakness for the person. This is the way Satan makes use of the "flesh" as a weapon against us.

We must therefore always remember that the struggle against the devil is achieved primarily in the struggle against temptation and sin, and the victory we would share with Christ is dependent on our triumph over temptation. There is no middle ground for a Catholic in this spiritual war, he must continually fight and win over temptations or lose his soul. We read in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* n. 405: "Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, erases original sin and turns a man back toward God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle." Do we experience the struggle in this battle? Do we experience the effort and difficulty to become holy, of overcoming temptations and doing good? If not, one may already be yielding unconsciously to the enemies of the soul.

It is sad that Christianity is now usually presented merely as a consoling experience, a feel-good belief system, a means to become materially wealthy and get all of one's desires fulfilled. Listen to how some preachers preach about the Gospel; they seem more to be smooth-talking salesmen trying to sell their wares than evangelists challenging for an authentic Christlike living in today's secular world. What about the will of God, the growth in holiness, the narrow road, the carrying of one's cross and following the Lord, the loving of the unlovable, the seeking first of the Kingdom of God, the interior life, the struggle for growing in the moral and theological virtues, the battle against the devil, the world, and the flesh, the corporal and spiritual works of mercy? This is one of the strategies of Satan; if he cannot eradicate the true religion, he will water it down, corrupt it, and even turn it upside down; it is remade in its essence according to man's standards, wants, desires, and needs and not according to the real essence found in the will of God.

Satan also desires to undermine the confidence that a Catholic should have in God and Christ's Body, the Church; he presents God and the

Church as obstacles preventing man from enjoying life to the full. He deceives man with the lie that those who follow Christ do not enjoy life and will never be fulfilled in life. But ask any holy person or saint whether he is sorry for having chosen to follow Christ. See and read also if there was ever any saint in the history of the Church who was unhappy, unfulfilled, and depressed. Imagine, the devil, the ultimate unhappy, miserable, and tormented one presenting himself to man as an expert on human happiness and fulfillment.

Satan succeeded in the garden of Eden in convincing Adam and Eve that God had not given them enough when nothing more could have been asked by them. He tricked them by deceiving them that they could become divine without God. They had all that they needed to find peace, security, and contentment in the garden. They were just waiting to enter heaven by following only one rule to show their love for God: not to eat of the fruit from the tree of knowledge. The devil deceived our first parents into believing that God was keeping something back from them and he presented himself as the one who can reveal to them the secret of becoming like God. What occurred was Satan stripped our first parents of everything and closed heaven to them.

Now, God allows us to be tempted for a number of reasons. I will merely cite two. First, God permits temptations so that it should become manifest to a person what dwells deeply in his heart: Do we truly love God and desire to be with him, or is my life still centered on myself? For Adam and Eve, who had been given countless gifts by God, the temptation of the devil and their subsequent fall manifested the lack of trust and love for God even with all the blessings that they received. Temptation brings to light whether there is real love in our hearts for God or not since it is so easy to say, “I love God.” Now, when a Christian is tempted, God is saying to a soul, “Will you say yes to the temptation and hurt my infinite love for you, or will you show me that you love me?” Let us always keep in mind that love is always a test, for we have the freedom to say yes to it or no.

Second, through temptations, we grow in merit which makes us grow in holiness of life and would be our key to entering heaven. The grace that God gives us in the sacraments and in prayer is turned to merit through making use of it to overcome temptations. The reverse of this can be likened to a person who continually takes vitamins and other food supplements but never exercises; the supplements are later expelled by the body and therefore wasted. Exercise, on the other hand, makes use of the vitamins to become healthy.

Let us remember that no one can grow in virtue unless he is tempted because to overcome a temptation, we need to practice a virtue. St. Catherine of Siena stated that virtue is only proved by its contrary

whether they come from sinful men or situations. And that even the devils render glory to God because through their attacks upon faithful Christians, these attacks do not destroy but instead fortify and prove the faith of these Christians.

"Don't think, even though it may seem so to you, that virtue has already been gained if it hasn't been tried by its contrary" (St. Teresa of Avila).

Now, how does the devil attack? Let us look at some of his strategies and tactics to be better aware of not falling into his snares.

His main expertise is his ability to present evil as something good. Priorities and values are interchanged and he is able to even make sin look trivial. One of his lies is this, he tells us: "God will forgive you, go on, do it." This, of course, is the sin of presumption. It would be like planning to hurt a loved one first and then to ask forgiveness after the event.

A further point is this: in man's renouncing of sin and evil, the devil makes one feel that he is losing something that he would not be able to live absolutely without, that the soul will not find happiness unless it abandons itself to the sin presented. It is usually only when a person struggles to overcome these temptations of the devil and triumphs over them that he would easily see right afterwards the great deception and lie.

The devil also makes us believe that it would be impossible to resist the temptation; if he sees us struggling hard, he may even add the words, "Give in now, you can always start becoming better tomorrow." Of course, by tomorrow, more demonic chains will be encircling the person. Do we really believe that God would allow us to be tempted beyond our capacity? This is not Christian thinking. Many times, we fail because we do not ask for the grace to overcome temptations; hence we fight alone.

Another point is that the devil would make us believe that the temptation will never end. This in order for us to just give in and get it over with. Let us remember that God will never allow a temptation to last longer than what is necessary for us to gain merit. If we are confronted with this strategy of the devil, our strategy is to say, "I'll think about it tomorrow." By tomorrow, when the temptation is over or at least has greatly lessened in intensity, one would see the reality of this lie of the devil.

Now, if and when a person gives in to the temptation and falls into mortal sin due to the devil's lies and deceits, the devil then immediately begins to laugh. And right away the soul recognizes the great deception

and that it has lost everything; it stands completely naked before God, stripped of sanctifying grace, the infused virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Trinity in fact. It has lost all merits acquired during the course of its entire life. The soul is dead in the truest sense of the word. Since the soul is a spiritual reality, while we are alive, we would never be able to truly experience the death of a soul. It is only in the next life that one would experience fully the horrible reality of a lifeless soul; one word encapsulates this entire reality and that is hell.

After a person falls, the devil then moves from deceiver to accuser. This time he insistently and even violently accuses the sinner in order to destroy all confidence in returning to God. The soul then enters into another spiritual battle which, without God's support in its weakened state, can end in the soul falling into despair. This strategy the devil employs when he enlarges before a person's eyes the sins he has committed that the devil himself pushed him to commit. The objective of Satan is to make one believe that his sin is greater than God's mercy, which, of course, is one of his greatest lies! Imagine if St. Augustine listened to this lie, would he have become one of our greatest saints?

If we fall into mortal sin, we must immediately go to the sacrament of Reconciliation. It may not be easy to find a priest these days but let us ask ourselves, "What would one do in a medical emergency if he could not find a doctor? Wouldn't he search for another one?" How about the death not of the body but of the soul? The devil will make it so, that we find many excuses and experience a lot of distractions in order for us to remain long in the state of mortal sin. In this weakened state we would then fall again and again, each successive fall making us more and more a slave to sin and to the devil.

Spiritual Combat Tactics To Overcome Temptations

1) Let us always remember that the remorse of conscience is a very great gift of God to us. Let us always be aware of it and listen to it. By not listening to it, we would slowly kill our conscience and end up falling into the sin against the Holy Spirit which is hardness of heart.

2) We must know ourselves well, especially our hidden weaknesses because the devil knows us intimately, seeing all hidden vulnerable areas of attack that we may not even be conscious of. To find out areas of vulnerability, we may ask ourselves, "If I were a third party out to destroy my soul, how would I go about it?"

3) Vigilance is especially important in spiritual growth: being watchful and prayerful. This means always being aware and

avoiding the near occasions of sin for us and renewing frequently our resolution not to sin again.

4) During times of temptation, in order to win over them:

   a) Accept the reality that you are being tempted; you may say to yourself, for example, “I am being tempted to speak uncharitably against this person.”

   b) Then state firmly in your mind or even verbally your stand against the temptation. “No! This sin will hurt God!”

   c) Now pray to God for the grace to overcome the temptation.

   d) Offer the battle for the love of God and for his greater glory.

   e) To strengthen your resolve, you may write down the temptation on a piece of paper and the effects it will have if you were to give in. Write down the effects it will have on you and on your relationship with God. Writing all this down allows us to see more clearly and distinctly what is at stake.

   f) To strengthen your resolve, you may think of the last sin you committed. Then ask yourself, “Was I happy after I sinned to have placed my trust in the devil? Didn’t I become disillusioned, miserable, angered, frustrated, saddened, and degraded after I sinned? Why then should I allow the same experience to repeat itself?

   g) To further strengthen your resolve, you may think of the following effects of sin: each fall weakens us, darkens our conscience, creates emotional and psychological scars in our character, strengthens the “old man” in us, and solidifies vice, rendering us more impermeable to the grace of conversion. Every success, on the other hand, strengthens us and produces virtue. We should never belittle the injuries that each sin causes us.

   h) It is important to remember that one must resist temptations with great serenity and interior peace because a tactic of the devil is to excite and make us anxious, to destroy our peace of mind and heart so that we would more easily fall. Getting emotionally anxious and distressed when struggling against a temptation will make the temptation stronger. Fight with calmness of mind and of firmness of heart.

   i) Practice what we call “positive resistance.” This is doing the precise opposite of the temptation. Examples are: speaking well

of someone instead of criticizing him, giving generously to someone in need when tempted to be selfish, prolonging prayer time when tempted to abandon it.

j) Let us also remember that if the temptation comes again and again, this is the best proof that one has not yet succumbed to the temptation. And secondly, every assault repulsed is a source of new merit, grace, and development of greater interior strength.

Extraordinary Assaults of the Devil

God allows us to witness extraordinary manifestations of the devil so that we never underestimate this enemy and we would see as well the horrible reality of evil and sin. Although this topic will be dealt with in more detail in the third volume, the two main causes of extraordinary demonic assaults such as possession, oppression, and obsession are sin and the occult.

With regard to the occult, the devil through the New Age Movement and folk religiosity subtly causes "openings" in man where the devil has more access to the interiority of man so that he is then able to attack the person physically and psychologically and not only merely through temptation. In attacking extraordinarily, we see clearly the true nature of the devil, his hateful and destructive nature.

Sin is another opening. According to the great Alexandrian theologian of the third century, Origen, every one of the seven capital sins with all its derivations is governed by a particular evil spirit that creeps into us every time it succeeds in enticing us to sin. Therefore, the more an evil habit is hardened through the practice of evil, the more that the demon corresponding to that evil increases its power over us.

According to Fr. Jose Antonio Fortea, an exorcist from Madrid and an expert in the field of demonology, in his book, *Interview with an Exorcist, "Each demon sinned in a certain way and with a determined intensity. While the angelic rebellion against God had its roots in pride, from this root other sins were born. This can be clearly seen during an exorcism, when the particular demons possessing the person display sins of anger, self-worship, desperation, etc. So each demon has its own psychology and its own way of being. Some are talkative, others are mocking, some are proud, others are hateful, etc. Even though they all turned away from God, some demons are more evil than others."* [38] This all would help us to better understand the specialization of the demons and the names they take that point to these specializations. So, for example, a possessed person can be under the dominion of a spirit of the occult, or a spirit of suicide, or a spirit of

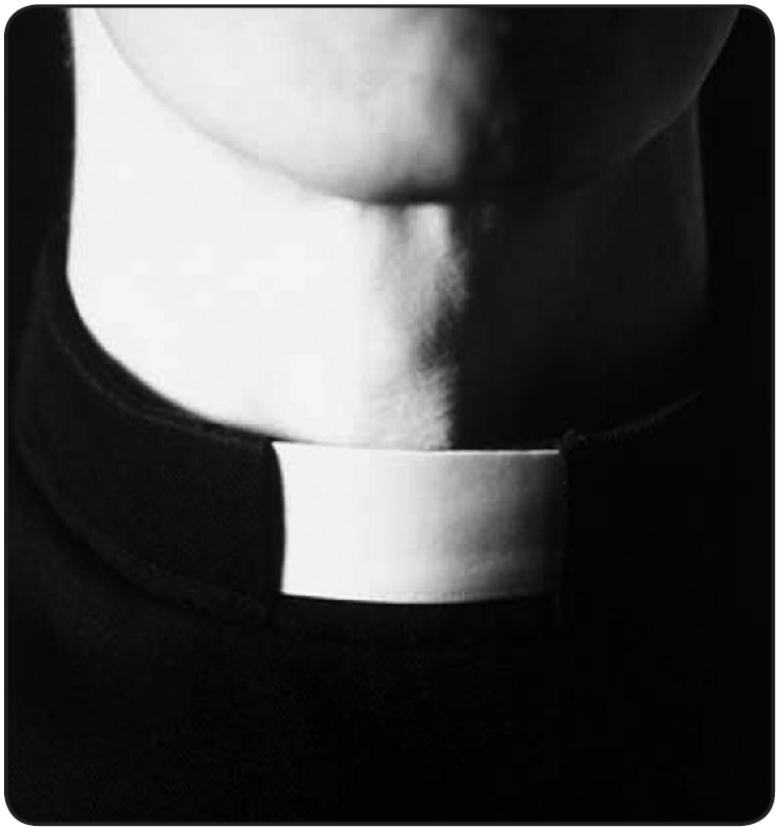
violence.

Now, one must keep in mind that there is no order in the fallen hierarchical system of the fallen angels; they hate one another and the seeming order among them is maintained by coercive power and force; the more powerful evil spirits hold the lesser evil ones in proud and hateful subjugation. This dynamic can be seen in these examples:

a) In the case of going to an *albularyo* for a physical ailment caused by an evil spirit, we ask, "When the pain is taken away, does that mean that the evil spirit causing the malady has been dislodged?" In reality what occurs is that the illness and the spirit behind it have been merely subdued. The less powerful evil spirit causing the physical sickness is subjugated by the more powerful demon with its own specific form of manifestation, like depression or insanity. This is the reason why some *albularyos* do not want to deal with people oppressed by spirits that he "sees" are more powerful than the spirit giving him powers; it is useless and he may be a target for revenge by the more powerful oppressing spirit. So, when a person seems "healed" by an occultist, what actually happens is that not only does the ailment become graver, albeit in another form, this time there are more spirits attached to the victim.

b) In an exorcism, many times the evil spirits, due to the intense suffering, already want to leave the body of the victim since an exorcism has been known to be more tortuous than hell itself, yet a more powerful demon can prevent the weaker one from leaving the body. This I have noticed myself during an exorcism.

c) We also see this dynamic when witches and sorcerers from two rival villages perform curses, spells, and counterspells to destroy their enemies in the opposing village. The more powerful magic is the one that has contact with the higher levels of the fallen angels; the higher the choir from which an angel fell, the more powerful it is. Death curses and the like are sent and protection spells are created. The demons we now see include man in their hatred for each other. They allow themselves to be used, so that man in the end would share their doom. This occurs due to the right that they attain over their followers as well as the many sins and evil that are perpetuated in the conflict between the two camps. Evil spirits desire to be used by man in their conflicts because they are also able to express their evilness and destructive nature on the world.



CHAPTER XIV

True Stories from the Vatican and Italian Exorcists[39]

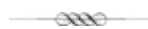
The following narratives are true contemporary experiences of exorcists in and around Rome. These stories are taken from the book of Fr. Francesco Bamonte, a Vatican exorcist and lecturer on the Vatican course on exorcism and deliverance.

Fr. Giancarlo Gramolazzo, the former president of the International Association of exorcists:

> “A clear case of real possession that I experienced during the time I worked with Padre Candido concerns a four-year-old little boy who, by the way, had a beard like an adult, spoke with the voice of an adult, could jump to frightening heights, and lifted furniture that not even adults could be able to lift.”

> “The following, however, is a true case of possession: I was once speaking with a person who had been introduced to me for examination. We spoke of ordinary things and occasionally this person asked some pointed questions. I made a simple sign of the cross on her: she immediately fell under the seat curled up between the four legs of the chair in a manner that I believed an accomplished contortionist would not find it easy to imitate. She had also momentarily lost consciousness such that when she came back to her

senses she was surprised and asked me what she was doing under the chair and how she ended up there. I did not know what to respond but rather asked her in turn what she was doing under the seat. I repeated the sign of the cross two or three other times with the same result. Therefore, I decided to begin exorcism. I can only leave what followed to the imagination: one arm started turning on its own, as if it were a strange body; the same happened to the head, and strange signs appeared on the arms and hands. The exorcisms lasted two years. She belonged to a satanic sect for many years without the knowledge of anyone in which she held an important post and was advancing in rank to become a priestess. She was scared because she was to be subjected to a cruel ritual, so she fled. During some of the rituals she had unconditionally offered her intelligence and will to the service of Satan. Accompanying her in the faith was not, and is still not, an easy task."



"A parish priest involved in the rehabilitation of young foreigners introduced to me a Nigerian girl who had come to Italy for work, but like many of her country fellows in a similar situation, she was deceived and ended up working on the streets. She had no passport and was threatened with violence and terrorized with voodoo rites carried out in her presence. When she was freed from her oppressors, she wished to become a Catholic and be baptized. Her parish priest related to me the strange things that started happening to this girl shortly afterwards: she changed completely, as if she were some other person, with a totally masculine voice; she had inexplicable bouts of somnambulism and other troubling phenomena. During exorcism, she acted like a serpent, at other times she levitated and spoke perfect Italian, which she could not normally do and even understand, the local dialect of my countryside. I exorcised her for one year. She had been dedicated to some spirits right from childhood in Nigeria."

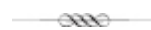
Fr. Alfonso Santoriello:

"In 1994 during the extraordinary Marian Year proclaimed in the diocese, the bishop charged me to assist the rector of a sanctuary. During Mass on the feast of the Assumption, when it was time to receive the Eucharist, a woman gnashed her teeth and began making a joke of me, she spat on me and wanted to attack me but her relatives prevented her. After the Mass, the woman was brought to me in the

sacristy as I was arranging the liturgical vessels. As soon as she saw me, the woman once again gnashed her teeth and started to curse me and to spit at me as she had done earlier during the Mass. I asked the woman in a simple way: 'But who are you?' And a harsh voice with a marked masculine and hollow tone responded through the woman: 'I am Beelzebul, Satan, and the spirit of anxiety.' Like someone engaged in a joke, I replied: 'My pleasure, I am Don Alfonso!' At this reply the voice reacted with more fierce curses. Then I said: 'Ah, alright, you are really ready for a joke!' Earlier on, having observed that the holy water container was empty, I had filled it up with water but did not have enough time to bless it; but none of them could have known that. I sprinkled her with that water that was yet to be blessed. Normally, anyone who sees a priest with a sprinkler and water inside the holy water container cannot but think of holy water, but the voice speaking through the woman, after uttering a swear word, said: 'I will use this water that you have not blessed for toilet!' That voice demonstrated clearly the knowledge that the water in that container was not blessed. This was the first clear indication that that woman was not suffering from a psychic illness. I asked myself why the devil revealed this, thereby disclosing himself. I remember having prayed the Lord during communion and after to help me understand whether that woman was really disturbed by the Evil One or was simply sick and I believe that this was his first answer to my prayer: forcing the devil to give me a sign of his presence. We fixed another meeting for an eventual exorcism with the relatives who accompanied her and with the express permission of my bishop. When we met again, they brought along a young boy who was presented to me as possessed; I had no previous knowledge of him. I began exorcism on both of them in the sanctuary behind closed doors. During the moment of imperative commands, addressed in Latin at the devil, the woman did not respond but hissed like a serpent and then drew in the air like a sponge while her body assumed the form of a plastic sack that is being 'vacuum sealed.' When I asked again in Latin for her name, the woman said nothing while the boy said: 'Ask me, ask me, and I will give you an answer!' These words gave me the first suspicion that the young man was pretending. After visiting many exorcists, he had actually memorized the words: *'dicas me nomen tuum.'* His response did not correspond to that which a possessed person usually says when the devil is really present: that is, the precise name (for example, Asmodeus, Azazel, Lucifer, etc). The young man responded in a generic manner: 'the demon.' Earlier, I had seen a chip of wood on the edge of the way leading to the sanctuary and a thought came to me to pick it up and to cover it up in a piece of cloth. I took out

that chip of wood from my pocket and placed it on his forehead. The young man cried out: ‘Take it off me, take it off me, it is burning me!’ To me this was a second indication that the boy was pretending. On the other hand, when I placed it on the forehead of the woman whom I believed was possessed, she laughed at me as if to say: ‘What do you think you are doing with this piece of wood?’ I conducted a third test as follows: I had with me a bell which I had blessed and I started ringing it. The truly possessed woman screamed: ‘Enough, enough, enough, I don’t want to hear the voice of God!’ The young man instead even asked me if he could ring the bell as well. This last behavior convinced me of his simulation. However, to avoid every doubt, I asked him to come again for a final and definitive verification. I pretended to be reading from the ritual but in reality I was reading a book of poetry in Latin and he kept reacting, swinging himself about and screaming. After this final test I had no more doubt about the false possession and I asked his relatives to take him to a doctor.”

“On another occasion, they brought me a boy of eleven years whose medical records showed that he was not sick, but externally he appeared to have all the signs of autism. I verified in him both a psychic illness and the extraordinary action of the devil. In fact, as I was directing some mental commands at the devil, the boy responded in a vulgar way or with sneers. One day, I had stomach ache but no one knew about it. After giving him a mental command, he drew close to me and with a jeering laughter he landed a blow on the precise point of the stomach I was feeling the pain. Then he started laughing and shouted: ‘I have got you this time around!’ ”



“Once they brought me a three-year-old baby girl. Her cranium was larger than that of normal babies of her age. She was very hyperactive; she had never talked but only gesticulated, occasionally emitting incomprehensible expressions. Doctors had diagnosed a special form of autism. The moment I imposed my hands on her and asked her in Latin: ‘Tell me your name,’ she immediately said: ‘No, no, no.’ She had never said ‘no’ prior to that time. I continued to talk to her mentally and ordered her in Latin: ‘Give in to God.’ The baby once again said: ‘No, no, no.’ Then, out of doubt I began speaking audibly,

saying: ‘What is your name?’ and she retorted: ‘And you, what is your name?’ The parents were astonished. Again, in this case, just as in the case of the eleven-year-old boy, I had recounted the little girl was suffering from a kind of autism aggravated by a real maleficent presence.”

“I was called by some friends who wanted me to treat a particularly sensitive case for which the best pediatricians in the area could not provide any explanation or effective cure. It was the case of a newborn baby of eight months that cried day and night since his birth, vomited everything he ate, to the point that his father decided to abandon the family, leaving his wife and the other children in a state of absolute desperation. It has to be pointed out that all the medical tests proved that the child was normal such that the doctors were surprised at how the baby could survive without food. The parents were greatly worried that when they tried to play with him like it is done with other babies, he never gave the slightest hint of a smile. One Thursday evening, I entered the house carrying the statue of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. After placing the statue on the little throne prepared for the occasion by the family, some incidents began happening that were very strange, to say the least. There was in the room a lighted chandelier with seven bulbs that started working intermittently. Let me explain better: while making the sign of the cross, as soon as I said, ‘In the name of the Father’ four bulbs went out while three remained lighted but they emitted such an intense light that it looked like they were about to explode; when I said, ‘and of the Son’ the three that were on went off while the four that were off came on, and they burned so strongly that they also seemed like exploding; when I said, ‘and of the Holy Spirit’ all the seven bulbs came on with the same very intense light different from how they used to be. I tried doing the sign of the cross in another room where there was only one bulb and this also began functioning intermittently and to emit a very intense luminosity. All this happened in the sight of those present and they were very frightened. I had to try very hard to make them remain calm. Then I drew close to the baby and tried to make the sign of the cross on him, but immediately he assumed an ugly countenance like that of an irate adult. Suspecting possession, I took the relics I had brought along with me and without exposing them, I came close behind the baby. Immediately, the baby grunted and at the same time tried to land a blow on my face. The parents were literally terrorized because they had never seen their baby behaved in such a fearful

manner before. The events that were unfolding before us left no doubt about the extraordinary presence of the Evil One. I told my bishop about it and he authorized me to carry out exorcism on the baby. I started the following day. The result was positive. During the exorcisms carried out in the house of the baby for three days, the Lord manifested his greatness and power. The baby was liberated and for the first time after eight months from his birth, he smiled and continued to live like a normal baby. Now, he is of pre-adolescent age and is doing well. It is worthy of note to observe that there were some objects upon which a spell had been cast, which were uncovered during this exorcism. These were little bags that were stitched up, which had been given to the parents as talisman by witches whom they had visited: the father of the baby had one in his wallet while they put away the other two in drawers in the bedroom. I was especially awestruck by three apparently harmless wooden masks placed by the kitchen furnace: the bigger one at the center and the smaller ones by the side, the parents of the baby had bought them from some black itinerants some years ago while visiting Rimini. Out of curiosity, they were attracted to the black itinerants by some strange, apparently folklorist dance that they were performing along the beach. From their description of what took place, I understood that it was a rite of voodoo. It is obvious that the parents did not know the danger lurking in that rite and they had no idea whatsoever of the consequences that it was to bring about a year later. The masks the itinerant were carrying about were beautifully exposed for the unfortunate buyers who had no idea of the dangers involved. It was the Evil One who subsequently revealed the secrets. In fact, during the exorcism, those masks began emitting a stench and, to the great surprise of the parents, the same stench also emanated from the baby's body while he was being liberated from the Evil One. Another curious fact was that while burning the masks, I had to pray intensely to God with great faith because despite having poured on them the kind of fuel that the peasants use for their tractors, they were not engulfed by the flame and did not burn. They could only catch flames and burn when at some point it occurred to me to sprinkle holy water upon them. In conclusion, it is important to bear in mind that the origin of the devils in that family was when the three masks were bought and brought into the house."

"I do the imposition of hands and mentally pray for deliverance. If the devil is really present, he does not bear the imposition of consecrated

hands on the head, and if the person reacts in a certain way and responds to the mental commands that he is incapable of knowing, then the devil is present. Some say: But the devil could hide himself! This could happen once, but at the second time, if he is there, he is forced to show some sign. He is the proud one, the haughty one par excellence and he cannot bear it that a miserable human creature like the priest should be accorded this enormous dignity and that he should impose his hands on his head. Therefore, he is only able to hide for a short while before he 'explodes' with 'anger.' However, the discernment of the real presence of the extraordinary action of the devil also depends on the faith and prayers of the priest. Some years ago, Don Gabriel Amorth disclosed that he used to tell those who came to him concerning the use of holy water, blessed salt, and blessed oil: '(Have) less water and more faith, less salt and more faith, less oil and more faith!' This applies not only to persons tormented by evil spirits but also to priests as well."

Fr. Cyprian de Meo:

Here is one case of Fr. Cyprian that involved a possessed woman.

"One day, Don Gaetano di Iorio, dean of the priests (archpriest), and Doctor Martino Canonico, both of Villamaina, a little countryside close to Gesualdo, went to Father Cyprian to speak with him. Since he was occupied with an exorcism, they waited for him in the church. The devil, using a masculine voice, said through the possessed woman: 'Do you see those two? They do not believe that I am the devil.' Father Cyprian recalled concerning this case: I replied: 'What does it matter to me if they do not believe!' At the end of the exorcism, I met with the two 'unbelievers' and immediately the doctor said to me sincerely: 'Father Cyprian, do not waste your time with that mad woman!' The dean was also of the same opinion. I replied: 'You hold on to your opinion, I am convinced of the contrary.' Both of them went back to their normal occupations. The doctor had his usual visit of patients in the hospital wards and in the evening, having closed his car in the garage, he went up into his house (located above the garage) and made for the bedroom to sleep. As he was going up the ramp of the stairs, he heard a strange sound of his car horn. He went back to find out the cause but everything was in order; he went up the stairs once again and midway up he heard the horns sound twice, so he went back once again to find out. He saw everything was in order so he thought that perhaps tiredness caused him to hear the horns that he had blown in the course of the day. He went up to his

room and was about to go to bed when he heard three sounds of the horn. Surprised and frightened, he took his revolver and came down to the garage, thinking that some hoodlum was responsible, but once again everything was in order. The following day, the doctor and the dean of priests met each other at the little square of the village and were conversing. They saw the woman accompanied by her mother and going towards the convent where I reside. The dean asked her: 'Are you going to Gesualdo to Father Cyprian?' The woman did not reply to the archpriest but turning to the doctor, said with a male voice: 'I frightened you last night?' The doctor who said nothing to the archpriest, wanting to maintain his dignity as a professional, replied: 'What are you talking about? Do I even know you? Get away!' However, the doctor recounted everything to the archpriest immediately afterwards, and leaving him at the square, hastened to me at the convent in his car before the woman who was coming on foot. He told me everything and then added: 'Father Cyprian, call me each time this woman comes to you for exorcism and I will come immediately. I believe that she is not mad as I have supposed until now.' He kept his word, coming always to pray with the onlookers."

"One day, I instructed a seminarian in the sacristy to fill a cup with holy water. While no one else was observing, I took that cup and entered the parlor. I placed it on the table and said: 'Some fresh water will do you good, drink it.' She looked at the cup repeatedly without touching it, so I encouraged her, saying: 'Do not be afraid, it is not poisoned, see I am drinking it,' and I took a sip. She made a grimace, turning up her nose and said with a slow and stentorian voice in the *irpine* dialect: 'This is not the water that we drink.' I replied: 'Is it that the water of Torella of the Lombards (the woman's country) is better than this one?' And like someone who would not like to be taken for a ride, she said with a loud voice: 'Don't play dummy with me, this is holy water.' I denied it, knowing that I was not telling the truth: 'It is not holy water; I took it from the tap with my own hands.' She retorted, immediately saying to me: 'Now you are a liar, others got this water, not you.' That was true, in fact, I had earlier gone into the kitchen and asked the person in charge to bring a cup of holy water from the sacristy but he told me that he was busy so I had to ask the seminarian. I repeatedly asked the spirit to drink and in the end he drank. I asked him: 'But how could you, it is holy water and you drank it?' He replied: 'I am not the one who drank it, she did.' I returned to the kitchen, filled the cup with tap water, and brought it to him; he drank it and said: 'You got this from the tap.' "

"One day, a crazy idea (which I never entertained again) came into my head and I said: 'I want to see you.' He accepted the proposal and

said: ‘We shall come this night at eleven thirty.’ Then I said: ‘Alright, but how do you come in? I will lock the doors.’ He replied: ‘We shall enter with the wind (he meant like spirits). But you have to remove all those statues of the Virgin Mary and the crucifixes that you have in your room.’ ‘Alright, I will remove them all,’ I said. He added: ‘Good, but you must remove that mantle you put on’ (he was referring to the religious habit that friars put on even when they are sleeping). I replied: ‘Certainly, but I will have the cord.’ ‘No, you must remove that first.’ When I showed my willingness, he said: ‘This night, we shall turn your flesh real black’ then he made a claw-like gesture with the hands and twisted his mouth to the right and to the left, baring his teeth in anger. I challenged him, saying: ‘Come, I will be waiting.’ This was madness, but certainly under divine control. Then he said again: ‘But you have to remove some other thing, all those Mass things that you keep in the box.’ I thought within myself: ‘Imagine where this fellow is poking his nose into, even in my box.’ In fact, I was keeping what I needed for Mass in a box as well as the alb of my first Mass, which I only used on few occasions. Not even my superiors were aware of this. Surprised and intrepid, I confirmed the agreement. At this point the adversary changed his mind; feeling anger and humiliation, he changed his program. He hit very forcefully on the table and kept his eyes on the ground and his elbows on his knees. This made me curious and I asked: ‘What happened? Have you changed your mind?’ Angry and with the left hand between his teeth, he said: ‘The Virgin Mary told us not to touch you.’ Then I asked: ‘How? Is she in our midst?’ He replied: ‘Yes, she is behind your back, but I cannot look at her,’ pointing the index finger of the left hand to my back and his angry face fixed to the ground. It should be noted that no sacred portrait was hanging behind my back, which he could be alluding to. I said, with a reassured voice: ‘If the Blessed Virgin is involved, then you are finished.’ I observed three things on that occasion: the requested proof (the things for Mass I kept in the box), my presumptuous challenge and, in a wonderful manner, the intervention of the Blessed Virgin Mary that saved me from a sure tragedy.”

“In the course of the exorcisms, Father Cyprian discovered that the woman became possessed because a witch had given her ashes and bones of the dead to drink after doing some strange signs on her. Under interrogation, the devil was responding to questions on theology, philosophy, and history in a way that removed every doubt about his presence. He was responding in the local Gesualdine dialect even to questions put in Latin or English. These languages were unknown to the woman who became completely delivered after

almost one year from the first exorcism."

CHAPTER XV

From the Mouths of Demons[40]

The following accounts are cases of possession wherein the devil and his demons were commanded by God against their will to speak the truth. Here we see the dreadful plans of the devil for us which should serve as a warning but also the touching love of God and Mama Mary which gives us great confidence in them as we continue to struggle against evil and sin in the world. These accounts are also taken from the book of Fr. Bamonte.

> "I will now delve into some aspects of that which we could call 'the involuntary catechesis' of the devil, drawn from real cases of possession.
>
> "His expressions during exorcism are varied: some are frequently repeated and directly or indirectly confirm fully the truths of our Christian faith. Many times, for example, he has affirmed that his principal activity among men is not possession but temptation. In accordance with the definition of him contained in the *Rituale Romanum* as *'malorum radix, fomes vitiorum, seductor hominum, proditur gentium'* ('the root of all evil, the source of vices, seducer of men, deceiver of the people'), his tempting activity was once summarized in this exceptional and categorical synthesis: 'Our "duty" is to tempt, always, anyone, anywhere and anyhow. Someone will fall into our trap, someone always falls into it.' In another exorcism he affirmed: 'He (referring to God) wants free and holy souls, I want enslaved souls.' With regard to the power of prayers, one day while the 'Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts' was said during the second exorcism according to the *Rituale Romanum,* he (the devil) was doubtlessly constrained by God to say: 'If you live with bended knees before him and sing his praises like angels do, we shall not have all the powers

we have over you.' A recurrent characteristic manifested during the exorcisms is his pride, such that one day he had to acknowledge: 'My pride is my power and my undoing.' "

"One of his recurrent requests is that of being adored as if he were God. Not willing to accept his creaturely status, he deceives himself claiming to be God and desires to receive from men the worship that is due to God alone. Very often he says during exorcisms: 'Worship me, worship me, I am god! Fall on your knees when my name is mentioned. I am the omnipotent! Call upon me!' The *Normae observandae circa exorcizandos a demonio*, n. 20 of the *Rituale Romanum* suggests that one can respond to these words with the words of the Holy Scriptures, for example, the words of Jesus in the desert: 'Get away, Satan! It is written: you should adore the Lord your God and only him shall you worship!' or with the words of St. Paul: *'In the name of Jesus every knee shall bow in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father'* (Phil 2:10-11). Some exorcists add spontaneous words like: 'Only God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is God. There is no other God. Fall down before him and worship him!' When he is asked to worship the only true God, he often responds angrily, with pride and presumption: 'Never, never! I am god. Look around and see how everyone follows me, how all seek for what I will give them.' On another occasion while he was told: 'There is no other God apart from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit…" He refuted it, saying: "The power I have over men is my god.' In effect he meant that he is god of all men who live in sin and far away from the true God. On a different occasion, while the exorcist was saying: 'Worship him, he is your true God, he created you, worship him!' he said in protest: 'He has taken flesh in you, what more disgustful and humiliating thing could he do! What a disgust we felt when he entered into that flesh!' "

"It is striking to observe what happens when an exorcist repeats the prayers that the angel taught the three shepherd children of Fatima, Francisco, Lucia, and Jacinta. In the year that Our Lady appeared to them, the angel also appeared to them and on the third occasion he was bearing in his hand a chalice with a Host upon it from which

drops of blood fell into the chalice. While leaving the chalice and Host suspended in the air, the angel prostrated himself on the ground and repeated the following prayer three times: 'Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I adore you profoundly and I offer you the most precious Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges, and indifferences by which he is offended and through the infinite merits of his Most Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I ask you for the conversion of poor sinners.' When an exorcist starts saying this prayer, the devil makes very violent reactions that become very intense as the words 'in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges, and indifferences by which he is offended' are pronounced, and at the final words, 'I ask you for the conversion of poor sinners,' the reactions are even more intense."

"Another characteristic behavior of the devil during exorcisms is to threaten extermination and destruction: with his scoffing language, he takes on everything that is beautiful, good, sane, and harmonious and promises to defile and destroy it: 'We succeed in putting not a few of our servants in the world in very high positions and from there they control and destroy.' Worthy of note is the devil's special hatred for the sacrament of Matrimony and family affections: he reacts rather very violently when the marriage of two spouses is blessed and when they are invited to renew their marriage promises. One day, he voiced out his hatred for the family very clearly in these words: 'I do not like how the women are all dressed up. They should be more scantily dressed so that sex continues to be very dominant and I will be able to destroy more and more families!' On another occasion he defined the sexual organs with an obvious metaphorical language as 'the center of the world!' Furious reactions are further noted when the exorcist blesses the engagement of those young people who seriously commit themselves to living this state in chastity; he calls this choice filthy."

"It is striking to note during exorcism the devil's manifestation of hatred coming from his profound satisfaction with evil in whatever form it is realized. An exorcist was once horrified as he heard this utterance: 'Take away that disgusting book of Apocalypse. It talks about that Woman who gives birth. I always want to devour children.

You can't imagine how?' The devil described with very chilling words both the daily extermination of children in every part of the world, the thousands of children killed in the wombs of their mothers, and the sexual violence against children. What makes such description even more horrifying is the fact that in the end the devil would add the expression, 'How I enjoy it!' He used this same expression while referring to the young people who reduce themselves to bare skeletons with drugs. On one occasion while being exorcised, he alluded once again to abortion, saying: 'You have also authorized me!' and then he emitted a long and treacherous laughter. The manner he turns around reality and moral principles, considering good as evil and evil as good, is very striking. For example, many times when presented a relic, he exclaimed: 'What a foul smell! It is the smell of one who has chosen him!' (referring to Jesus Christ whom he hardly calls by name out of hatred and contempt). When presented with a rosary crown, he defined it as 'a cursed chain with the cross at the end'; when sprinkled with the holy water, he protested: 'I do not want to be washed with this water that smells like shit and burns me.' On hearing the words 'Lord, bless this brother of ours!' he immediately retorted: 'Let him be cursed, I will bring him with me into hell!' At the words of the Gospel: *'Come to me all you that labor and are overburdened and oppressed and I will restore you'* (Mt 11:28), he immediately said: 'Come to me all you who are "happy," come to me all you who are perverse and I will give you rest.' "

"As the exorcist pronounced the words of exorcism of the *Rituale Romanum: 'inimice fidei, hostis generis humani, mortis adductor'* (enemy of the faith, adversary of the human race, bearer of death), the devil expressed his entire metaphorical words: 'The day we left him we told him: The power of evil shall be our altar; on it we shall sacrifice the souls of your cursed children; on that altar we shall make the blood of your cursed children flow. There is god for the one who hates, and that god is my god.' "

"In his invectives it is clearly manifested that he is the one who continually divides humans and incites them against one another. He actually likes to underscore that he likes the hatred between human beings and is greedy for human wickedness because, as he affirmed on

many occasions: ‘They are “food” that feeds me and strengthens me’; ‘We do not want accord, we want hatred and war, it does not matter where it comes from’; ‘Do you know how many “damned persons” we have all over the world?’ ”

“On one occasion, at the point where the *Rituale Romanum* prescribed the interrogation of the devil, when asked what was his name, he declared that he is called Sahaar and that he comes from the desert. The exorcist heard him say quickly: ‘I bring the desert!’ Subsequent exorcisms made the exorcist understand that by those words he meant both to indicate his specific unction of arousing hatred which brings about aridity, desolation, and death in human relations, and to demonstrate that he takes pleasure in physical and spiritual sterility.”

“In some instances his utterances are between the serious and the facetious, for example, the exorcist heard him say: ‘To us the priests who do their duty are bearers of bad luck because they spoil things for us!’ ”

“A special consolation comes from the Marian experience during exorcisms. Whenever the name of Our Lady is mentioned, exorcists witness how demons, out of disgust and hatred for the Mother of God, get highly infuriated. Without daring to call her name, they lament that she spoils their plans. A recurrent anti-Marian reaction of the devil is getting very angry at the mention of the Immaculate Heart of Mary because it makes him remember, as he has often yelled, that the world was consecrated by that… (an unprintable expression directed at John Paul II) to this Immaculate Heart leading to the failure of many of his projects worldwide. Concerning the rosary, on one occasion, while it was being hung around the neck of someone who was being exorcised, the devil immediately started to yell: ‘It is crushing me, it is heavy, that chain with a cross at its end is crushing me!’ At this the exorcist exclaimed: ‘From today on this sister of ours will be saying the Rosary daily’ and the devil retorted: ‘Anyway, only few of you say it (referring to the Rosary) in comparison to the whole

world!' For me that is good because it harms me, because when you invoke that Woman (he was referring to Our Lady), you remind me of the life of that Man (referring to the life of Jesus that is part of the Rosary).' On another occasion, the exorcist brought out the rosary from his pocket during exorcism and immediately the devil shouted: 'Remove that chain, remove that chain!' 'That chain!' 'That one with the cross at its end. You are whipping us with that chain!' This is also a metaphoric language which, however, makes us understand in a concrete way the power of the Rosary and how much the devil detests it."

"One day, the exorcist noted, to his surprise, that God was humiliating the devil by forcing him to praise Mary. In fact, as the devil was invoking Mary, he said: 'She is the only one that is everywhere, she "kills" me, has always "killed" me, she has always "killed" me, she places her feet on my head; her cursed veil strangles me always; none of us is able to resist.' At these words the exorcist exclaimed: 'Thank you, Mother, thank you, Immaculate Heart!' The devil retorted immediately: "Let that Heart alone: we pierced a sword through it and it did not die, we killed her Son and she did not die: she took up other children!' During another exorcism, while the exorcist was praising the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the devil said: 'Her Heart is our sorrow, the more we crushed her, the more she crushed us, the more she suffered, the more we suffered. We wanted to "be delighted" but instead she was killing us with her tears: her tears are like fire that is "killing" us.' Another day, as the same exorcist was invoking the intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the devil spoke about the thorns fixed on it (representing the sins of mankind) and about all those who repair the offenses against this Heart, saying: 'Men have helped me to insert thousands of millions of thorns among them, you yourselves have helped me insert all those thorns, you have helped me, but the more thorns, the more force; the more blood, the more power; the more pain, the more glory; your sins have been transformed into glory because so many souls have consecrated themselves to expiate them and each soul lifts out one thorn and each thorn that is lifted hammers in a ball of fire into our brain. We beat them up, we strike them, we burn them, we scratch them, we rend them apart, and they only bend down to pray. This torture will never stop, this torture will never stop. It is too much, too much! So many people recklessly consecrate themselves and they wait for nothing else but to die for that woman… and her Son!' "

“During another exorcism, as the devil was bragging about the suffering he inflicted on innocent persons, the exorcist started to pray strongly: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, while hanging on the cross it looked like you were defeated, when it seemed that darkness had conquered forever, you were actually conquering forever.’ Then the devil retorted: ‘It is entirely her fault, it is all the fault of his Mother. On account of this I had taught this idiot (referring to the person being tormented) to hate her but she has succeeded in overcoming this as well. She (referring to Our Lady) prays always, she never keeps quiet for one moment and we are frustrated by her prayers.’ He was evidently talking about the intercession that Mary made before God on behalf of the tormented woman and the increase in the love for Mary aroused by that woman. During another exorcism, talking once again with a metaphoric language (since the devil, as an immaterial spirit, has neither skin nor brain), the devil added: ‘Each time she comes down to this earth (referring to Our Lady) we sink abjectly. Each tear of hers tears up our “brain,” every step she makes signals our end. We are trying to stop her, but we may not succeed because she is more powerful than us. Evil has no power over her.’ ”

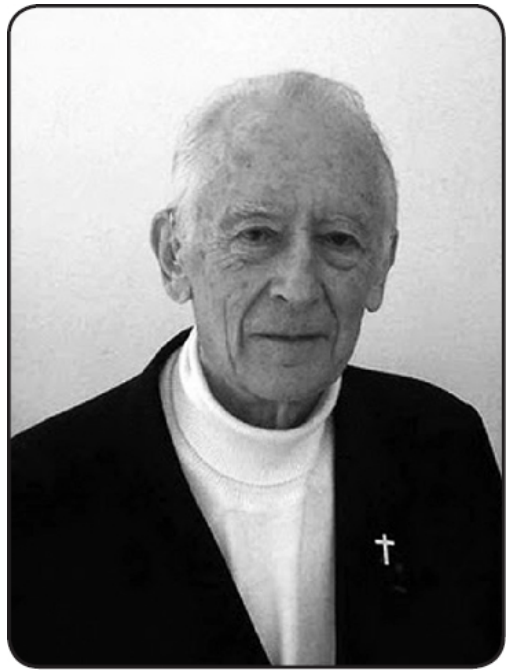
“The following is a very touching incident: one day, turning to the image of Our Lady that was present in the room where the exorcist was exorcising, the demon started yelling: ‘Why have you offered everything to that…? Whyyy? Whyyy?!’ The exorcist intervened, asking: ‘What has she offered?’ at which he replied: ‘Under the cross of that Man, she was suffering!’ He was referring clearly to the sacrifice that Our Lady made of her sufferings and those of Jesus to the eternal Father during the crucifixion. Then the exorcist began saying: ‘Remember that at the foot of the cross Mary offered Jesus to the Father and also offered herself with Jesus to the Father. She has offered this sacrifice for us her children.’ On hearing these words, the devil gave out an indescribable yell and, evidently crushed by the redemptive force deriving from the sacrifice of Christ and Mary on Calvary, he said: ‘Enough, enough, don’t make me remember, enough, you are burning me, you are burning me!’ ”

“On Good Friday of 2006, as an exorcist was carrying out his ministry, he was reading from the Gospel of St. John the words that Jesus directed to Mary: ‘Woman, behold your Son’ and the words directed to John: ‘Behold your Mother’ when the devil said: ‘In one instant she loved all her sons for all generations and said her second “yes.” After the “yes” to the angel, she said her “yes” to her Son on the cross so that you may become her children.’ Filled with amazement and joy, knowing that the devil had been obviously constrained against his will to say what he would otherwise never have said, the exorcist continued to read the rest of the Gospel: ‘And from that moment on the disciple took Mary to his house.’ And the devil added, with tremendous repugnance manifested in his voice and comportment: ‘The pure souls take the Mother of God into their heart. Your body and your spirit are dwellings of the Lord and you should bring her into it. All the children of God should take Mary into themselves, that is what she taught you with her life. You have a powerful instrument in Mary, make more use of it. Pray to her more and more, make her yours, she is always walking by your side.’ While the devil was saying these things as he was being exorcised, since this was Good Friday, a special day of grace, the exorcist reminded him of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for the love of us, his wounds, his blood, his pains, his humiliations, his sacrifice to the Father, as well as the tears and sorrows of Mary at the foot of the cross and her sacrifice together with her son to the Father out of love for us. And as he said these things, to the great dismay of the exorcist, the devil went on to affirm: ‘We were also there at the foot of the cross, we instigated some people against him, we instigated them to oppose him, to shout against him, to challenge him, and tempted others by creating doubts in their minds that he was not really the Messiah. Some were there to see miracles and to convince themselves that he was the Messiah; how stupid! We made many to flee that spot, no longer believing in him. They were frightened to see him die. The few that remained behind were convinced with his dying that he was nothing, because if he was dead there was nothing more to do. When they took his body down from the cross, we also tempted John. We told him in his mind: “See what tragic end has befallen your Messiah, see what end has befallen your Messiah!” We also tempted his Mother. Her heart was torn apart but yet there was great peace in it, she forgave all, she loved as she suffered: her forgiveness was total. Her sacrifice was total. This defeated us! In vain we made attempts at her faith, she continued to pray, she was the only one that kept intact her faith in the resurrection, her heart already knew it, and at the dawn of the day after Sabbath he showed himself first of all to her. We do not know

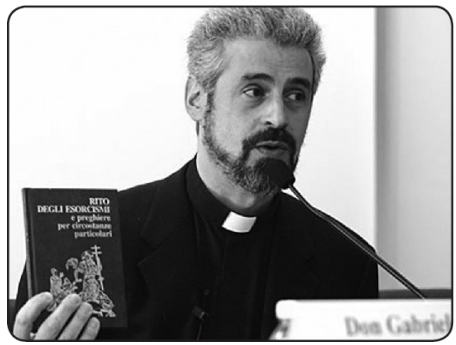
what they told each other but we saw that great peace and infinite love were circulating during that meeting but we could not hear the words, their loving conversation was beyond our reach. Then we saw the Magdalene as she went to the sepulcher.' "

"One day, as the exorcist was carrying out his ministry, he said he would celebrate the holy Mass for the possessed person, and the devil, who almost had no more power to react because the moment of his exit had come, gave this testimony: 'I do not know how it entered his mind to offer himself for you people who are no more than filthy garbage. How could he offer himself for these beings who are worth nothing, who do not understand how much he loved them, because they keep offending him. He has no need of the Mass, he has everything; he invented it only for you, only for you, to bring you nearer to him, to make you have him every day, and you stupid people spit at it. You do not accept him, you could really be like him. He wants you by his side (the devil said this with extreme difficulty) and every day he gives you that Body and Blood, which is disgusting to us but for you they are everything, the only means of salvation, so that you do not lose yourselves in us. How can't you understand it? How can't you understand it? He is there and he tells you "I am here. Take me" But to us he says: "Get behind me," and to you he says: "I am here" ' "

"One day during a great battle, the exorcist clearly sensed that the devil wanted to refuse saying what Christ was commanding him to say, but at a point, the devil exclaimed, completely overwhelmed by the power of God: 'He is commanding me to say to you: Do not be afraid, go to your God. Abandon every tie with evil in the world. Fill your lives with the Lord, make space only for Jesus Christ in you, follow him in joy and in pain. Praise him always, he is your salvation! Ahhhhhh!' (screaming on account of the tremendous effort he made in order to say something that was loathsome to him)."



Fr. Rene Laurentin, the greatest living Mariologist and the founder of the International Association of Exorcists



Fr. Gabriele Nanni, lecturer on the Vatican course on Exorcism

CONCLUSION

O my God, how I pity those people who do not believe in eternal life; how I pray for them that a ray of mercy would envelop them, too, and that God would clasp them to his fatherly bosom.

—St. Faustina Kowalska

Heaven is so great a good, that, to purchase it for us, Jesus Christ has sacrificed his life on the cross.

—St. Alphonsus Liguori

O man, if you wish to understand the blessings of heaven, know that in that happy country there is nothing which can be disagreeable, and everything that you can desire.

—St. Bernard

Heaven

In today's modern world, trying to reach heaven, our true destination in life and the only real reason why we are on this earth, can be a real challenge. Just trying to remain focused on this ultimate of goals can sometimes be a daily struggle; the worldly spirit and its alluring pleasures, the obstinate cravings of the flesh or concupiscence, and the devil with his tempting deceptions can bring about countless distractions and obstacles. If we are not careful, most of our time and energy can be lost and wasted in worthless pursuits. Lost time can never be retrieved. The very short time on earth given to us by God to attain our full potential as children of God and become future saints can be lost forever. We have only one life which is passing quickly away; we must therefore give it our best shot.

If we were given an amount of time to run around an area of land and all the area we had covered becomes our property, we will not even stop to rest because where we stopped would be permanent; but why is it that in our journey towards God, and what is at stake is infinitely more important, our experience of God which is forever, we get bogged down

by too much rest, enjoyment, worries, and distractions?

We must not fall into temptation and be sidetracked by people who seem to be enjoying all that the world can offer: persons living without any tinge of conscience, thinking themselves to be independent and free. A true knight of Christ is he who struggles to forgive others, loves and serves others for God's sake, follows faithfully the will of God found in his commandments and not his own will, strives to work and live honestly and simply, fulfills zealously his religious duties, prays faithfully and centers his entire life on deepening his relationship with God, should never fall into envy and succumb to the temptation to follow the path of the amoral and the immoral around him who are seemingly enjoying their carefree lives. As the psalms in the Old Testament continually testify, their enjoyment is so very short and their horrifying ruin will be eternal. Those who suffer exteriorly a little while on earth gain a joy and fulfillment while still alive and in the next life they experience a reward that is infinitely out of proportion to their earthly struggles. Let us now speak a little of what the reward of the just and faithful will be when the Lord calls them to himself.

St. Alphonsus tells us that "in Paradise, death and the fear of death are no more: in that place of bliss, there are no sorrows, no infirmities, no poverty, no inconveniences, no vicissitudes of day or night, of cold or of heat. In that kingdom, there is a continual day, always serene, a continual spring, always blooming. In Paradise there are no persecutions, no envy; for all love each other with tenderness, and each rejoices at the happiness of others, as if it were his own. There is no more fear of eternal perdition; for the soul confirmed in grace, can neither sin nor lose God."

And the saint also tells us that "there, everything is new; new beauties, new delights, new joys. There, all our desires shall be satisfied."

The saint further states, "But the delights of which we have spoken are the least of the blessings of Paradise. The glory of heaven consists in seeing and loving God face-to-face… Here below, God is hidden from our view; we can see him only with the eyes of faith: how great shall be our happiness when the veil shall be raised, and we shall be permitted to behold God face-to-face! We shall then see his beauty, his greatness, his perfection, his amiableness, and his immense love for our souls… the fear of not loving God, and of not being loved by him, is the greatest affliction which souls that love God endure on this earth; but, in heaven, the soul is certain that she loves God, and that he loves her; she sees that the Lord embraces her with infinite love, and that this love shall not be dissolved for all eternity. The knowledge of the love which Jesus Christ has shown her in offering himself in sacrifice for her on the cross,

and in making himself her food in the sacrament of the altar, shall increase the ardor of her love. She shall also see clearly all the graces which God has bestowed upon her, all the helps which he has given her, to preserve her from falling into sin, and to draw her to his love. She shall see that all the tribulations, the poverty, infirmities, and persecutions, which she regards as misfortunes, have all proceeded from love, and have been the means employed by divine providence to bring her to glory. She shall see all the lights, loving calls, and mercies which God had granted to her after she had insulted him by her sins… to gain heaven, it would be but little to endure all the pains of this life… Rejoice then; for all these pains, sorrows, and persecutions shall, if we are saved, be to us a source of never-ending joys and delights."

St. Faustina Kowalska of the Divine Mercy was given the great gift of experiencing heaven. She tells us in her *Diary*, "Today I was in heaven, in spirit, and I saw its inconceivable beauties and the happiness that awaits us after death. I saw how all creatures give ceaseless praise and glory to God. I saw how great is happiness in God, which spreads to all creatures, making them happy; and then all the glory and praise which springs from this happiness returns to its source; and they enter into the depths of God, contemplating the inner life of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, whom they will never comprehend or fathom."

She further says "The source of happiness is unchanging in its essence, but is always new, gushing forth happiness for all creatures. Now I understand St. Paul who said, "Eye has not seen, nor has ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love him."

She states that "incomprehensible is the happiness in which the soul will be immersed. O my God, Oh, that I could describe this, even in some little degree. Souls are penetrated by his divinity and pass from brightness to brightness, an unchanging light, but never monotonous, always new though never changing. O Holy Trinity, make yourself known to souls!"

She also tells us, "I saw how the angels and the saints of the Lord give glory to God. The glory of God is so great that I dare not to describe it, because I would not be able to do so, and souls might think that what I have written is all there is…"

Let us hear what St. Gregory of Nyssa has to say about heaven. What is heaven like? Heaven is simply going from glory to glory. What is glory? According to St. Gregory of Nyssa, it is like the heart of a young girl who is desperately in love with a young boy. But this young man does not seem to be interested in her. Yet her love grows and grows that she would do anything if only he would return her love. Gregory asks us to feel her desire and the intensity of her love. Then one day, this young

man gathers up all his courage, comes up to her, and simply says: “I love you!” Can you feel her heart? For a split second, is not everything perfect, everything wonderful?! This is the only taste of glory in this world and it never lasts very long. But when we die, we will “see” God in the beatific vision and then we will know as we could never know here that God is beauty, goodness, truth, and lovableness. We will experience a desire beyond anything imaginable in this life… a desire to be loved by this perfect lover! God will speak and say: “I love you!” and we shall go into infinite ecstasy into glory. This glory will act to increase our capacity for God, or desire for God… infinitely increase them. But when we have reached the peak of that infinite glory, God, who is infinitely more than infinite, for he is eternal, will call us as it were to a clearer vision of himself and we will desire a second time, infinitely more profound, to be loved by this Lover. And God will speak the Word: “I love you!” and we will go into an ecstasy, a glory infinitely greater than the first. And so it goes, each glory infinitely greater than the one before and infinitely less than the one to come… and there is no end!!! And yet all that was described is still not real in the sense that it does not show the reality which is infinitely greater.

So taking our cue from St. Gregory, use your imagination and try to picture the most enchanting, exalting, thrilling, and delightful experience you ever had in your life, your greatest peak experience where everything was just perfect. It may be a cozy Christmas gathering when you were still very young. You were seated with your entire family under the Christmas tree filled with gifts while outside the air was cool and everything else was peaceful, calm, and silent. There was so much love and laughter, and everyone was expectantly and excitedly waiting for midnight to strike for each one to open his gifts. Now imagine that this one experience is never ending yet not only does it never becomes monotonous but it continually gets even more delightful, more enchanting, and more joyful with the passing of time. And yet this example is a very poor comparison with what heaven truly is like. Let us remember that the least delight in heaven is much, very much more intense and greater than all the happiness on this earth put together! How truly marvelous is God’s love for us!

Some may ask, what about those we knew and loved while on this earth? How will our former relationships be when we meet each other in heaven? The answer is that in heaven there will be a great reunion and those we loved and cherished and who loved and cared for us on this earth will be with us; the special relationship we had while alive would not only be there in heaven but be greatly magnified since we would all love one another with the power of God’s love (the Holy Spirit) totally inundating our hearts.

But, of course, the greatest experience will be that of meeting God face-to-face! It is an experience beyond words or imaginations. Imagine the experience of the saints while they were still alive when God allowed them to taste just a tiny tinge of his love, they would go into ecstasy, their bodies would react so powerfully that they would levitate and they say that they would have died out of love if the grace of God did not sustain them and keep their hearts intact within their chests! What then would be the experience in heaven when God's infinite and full love enraptures a soul that has lived its life preparing to meet him? What would happen when we encounter Beauty, Goodness, Truth, and Holiness himself and we experience firsthand and fully his personal and infinite love for us? Can we even comprehend what it is to experience infinite love? While on this earth, we can ponder and simply remain in awe and gratitude of how great a God we have.

"Let us love God and labor for heaven. There the saints expect us, Mary expects us, Jesus Christ expects us, he holds in his hand a crown to make each of us a king in that eternal kingdom."

—St. Alphonsus Liguori

"Nevertheless, do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

—Lk 10:20

APPENDIX A

Is There Such a Thing as "Wandering Souls"?

We all know of stories of haunted houses wherein apparitions of spirits are seen wearing a variety of clothes, from the uniform of a soldier of a long lost forgotten war or maybe dressed in a fashion that was worn at the turn of the previous century. These ghostly images would be seen again and again either following similar patterns of behavior or manifesting unique characteristics each time. Aside from the apparitions, there would be the accompanying sounds heard during the middle of the night; they may be of moaning and weeping, or scraping on the walls and floors of the house. The frightened family then contacts a medium for help. This occult practitioner enters the house, then "senses" the place for a while and, when satisfied that there is indeed an entity, initiates communication with the spirit. While in a trance state, the following information is obtained: the "restless soul" is the spirit of a long dead occupant of the residence who died quite suddenly and unexpectedly hence leaving behind a lot of unfinished business. He seems to have no idea that he has already passed away or, if he has an inkling of this, he insists on remaining in our plane of existence due to a variety of personal reasons. The medium then tries to convince this spirit to "go to the light" in order to find peace. If there is no "light" to enter, the medium "mentally" creates one. After some time of discussion and even argumentation, the spirit is persuaded to enter the "light" and there seemingly ends the paranormal disturbances in the house.

Fr. Bamonte and Fr. Laurentin during the course on Exorcism

Vatican course on Exorcism and Deliverance

The author with Fr. Jojo attending a course on Exorcism in Rome

So the basic question is: Is there such a thing as “wandering souls,” that is, souls of the dead who usually do not know that they are dead and therefore perpetually wander this earthly plane? Are there spiritual entities, once human who tend to cause paranormal disturbances within the surrounding vicinity of a place because they continue to live out their former lives in a never-ending cycle? souls that must be contacted and then persuaded by psychics/mediums, to go into the “light” in order for them to finally find peace in a higher plane of existence? Let us now examine this occult theme of “wandering souls” within the context of God’s revelation found in our Church.

First and foremost, if the “wandering soul” theory is correct, then Jesus and his Church would absolutely have a ministry for these souls

since they are souls totally in need of compassion and mercy. There are very few things that could be worse than forever wandering this earth in some form of unfinished business. Let us remember that there has never been in, the 2,000-year history of the Church, a ministry to "wandering souls," only to the *poor souls in purgatory,*[41] for whom we pray and offer sacrifices for. Therefore, there never was a saint who did this form of "ministry" nor taught this; Jesus himself did not teach and practice such an activity. It has never existed in the Church; saints never contacted dead people and then led them to the "light" in order to help the "restless soul" and bring peace to a place.

Actually, this "ministry" goes against the teachings of God. The Bible states very clearly that one must never contact ghosts and spirits! In the Old Testament, we read: *"When you come into the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you, you shall not learn to imitate the abominations of the peoples there. Let there not be found among you anyone who… consults* ***ghosts and spirits*** *(emphasis is mine) or seeks oracles from the dead. Anyone who does such things is an abomination to the Lord"* (Dt 18:9-12a). The Church throughout her long history has always taught this. With regard to consulting mediums or those who try to communicate with souls of the dead, we read: *"Do not go to mediums… for you will be defiled by them"* (Lv 19:31a). And again: *"Should anyone turn to mediums… I will turn against such a one and cut him off from his people"* (Lv 20:6).

Second, at death, when a soul leaves the material body, the reality is that the person becomes much more aware and intelligent of what is real and now sees things as they truly are; this allows him to see clearly whether he is supposed to go to heaven, hell, or purgatory. This is what we call the particular judgment. Therefore, it would be impossible that a soul would not even know that he is dead and must wait for someone to tell him that he is and then be persuaded to enter the "light."

Third, God cares for us so intimately and infinitely while we are on this earth that even the hairs on our head are his concern; would he then allow that after a person dies, the person suddenly finds himself in a state of confusion and aimless wandering on this earth which could last for centuries? That is not the picture of God that Jesus is teaching us.

Finally, according to Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, OP in his book entitled *Life Everlasting and the Immensity of the Soul; A Theological Treatise on the Four Last Things: Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell*, if a person were to die and be left by God to an uncertainty about his final judgment on him (whether he would end up in heaven, purgatory, or hell), this would be contrary to the wisdom of God as well as to his mercy and justice. Hence when a person dies, he immediately knows where he is supposed to go and is not left in a state of uncertainty,

roaming this world in oblivion until a psychic/medium comes along and convinces him to go to the "light." It has always been a teaching of our Faith that the particular judgment happens at the precise moment of death, hence some saints would see the soul of a dying person immediately either rise out of the body to enter heaven or go downwards towards hell at the moment of death.

The teaching of the Church is very clear: "The New Testament… repeatedly affirms that each will be rewarded immediately after death in accordance with his works and faith" (CCC 1021) and again: "Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of heaven—through a purification or immediately—or immediate and everlasting damnation" (CCC 1022). Note the words "immediately after death" and "at the very moment of his death."

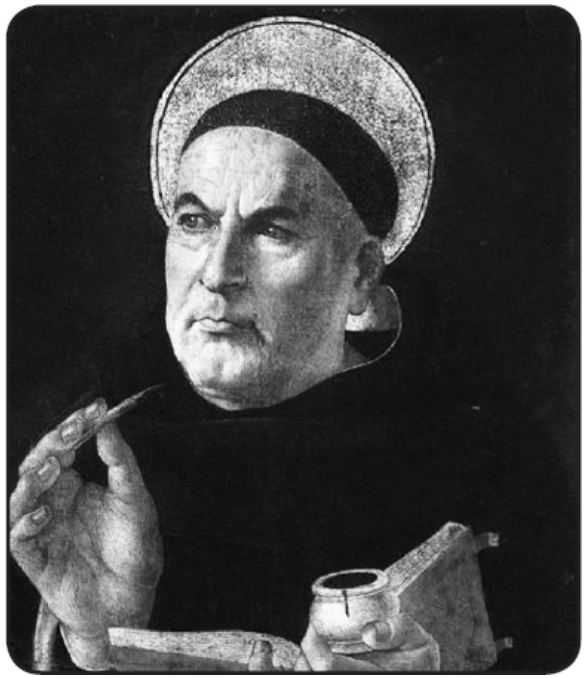
So the theory of the "wandering souls" is false. Those who believe in such a theory and practice the occult means to communicate with these "restless souls" are not only in the wrong but they also place themselves in a dangerous situation. Why? Among the many voices in the Church warning us against this, I will simply choose one: the well-known St. Augustine, a great Doctor of the Church. In his work, *City of God*, the saint tells us that "spirits are deceivers, not by nature, but by malice. They make themselves gods and **souls of the departed** (*emphasis is mine*), but they do not make themselves devils, for they really are so." The occult teaching of "wandering souls" is therefore a trap set by evil spirits to get humans to communicate with them which would then unknowingly invite them into their lives. This is one reason why God is so strict with regard to this point. I have encountered many cases in my ministry of exorcism of persons who were oppressed and even possessed because they unwittingly believed that they were making contact with souls of people long dead; the evil spirits would very accurately mimic the life of a long dead person. They can easily do this since they have been on this earth since time immemorial watching and tempting us. So after a medium/psychic leads a "soul" to the "light," the disturbances in a location may seem to have lessened but what actually happens is that the evil spirit either attaches to the psychic or it merely changes its form of harassment thereby deceiving the bystanders of the effectiveness of the occult intervention. So let us always be on our guard since the devil is a liar from the beginning and will continue trying to deceive us while we are still on this earth.

APPENDIX B

St. Thomas Aquinas on the Occult[42]

It remains for us to inquire whence the magic arts derive their efficacy: a question that will present no difficulty if we consider their mode of operation… the significative words employed by the magician are invocations, supplications, adjurations, or even commands as though he were addressing another… Therefore the magic arts derive their efficacy from another intelligent being, to whom the magician's words are addressed… This is also proved by the sacrifices, prostrations and other similar practices, which can be nothing else than signs of reverence shown to an intellectual nature.

— St. Thomas Aquinas



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS
(1225-1274)

Doctor of the Church and patron of all universities, colleges, and schools. He was an Italian priest in the Dominican Order and an immensely influential philosopher and theologian in the tradition of scholasticism. He is the model teacher for those studying for the priesthood. The works for which he is best known are the Summa Theologica*, the* Summa Contra Gentiles*, and* Office of the Blessed Sacrament.

The saint speaks about superstition as a sin against religion. He mentions that it either offers divine worship to whom it should not, or it offers divine worship to God in an unworthy manner. An example of the first definition is the blood and food offerings given to the elementals (like "dwarves" and spirits attached to trees or residing in streams, rivers, and mountains). An example of the second definition is when we treat God in a magical manner like that found in paganism/animism; the relational dimension is lacking. The name superstition is derived from a Latin word, *superstitiosi*, meaning "a survivor"; it refers to remnants from the false religions known collectively as paganism. So we see here that superstitious practices are not harmless traditions; they deal with the preternatural powers of the fallen angels.

According to the saint, superstition takes various forms: idolatry which gives divine honor to a creature (fallen angel or a deceased ancestor or person); divination which consults demons thus attributing divine powers to creatures (fortune-telling, astrology, etc.); false

observances or outer expressions of the belief that divine powers are found in creatures (magick, using amulets and talismans, incantations, and the like).

Going first to idolatry, St. Thomas tells us that, in itself, it is the gravest kind of sin, for it is directly against God. This sin pays divine honor to what is not divine. It would upset the order of the universe by ascribing universal control and absolute power to a creature. The saint speaks about idolatry founded on the solicitation of demons who offer themselves to be adored.

Next, the saint discusses divination; it is an effort to know the future using superstitious (occult/esoteric) means. It is sad that here in our country, the practice of divination and fortune-telling is still very much alive. How it really hurts God that we do not trust his divine providence; just like a human father whose child does not have the faith and confidence that his father really cares and watches over him especially in those areas in life that are beyond the child's control and power. We must practice the virtues of faith and hope if we truly desire to live as true children of God. Trying to contact our deceased loved ones through mediums and other occult practitioners to somehow check on them is also an abomination and affront to God since we lack the faith that he cares infinitely more than we with regard to them; we manifest our faith in God by trusting in his divine mercy.

Divination, according to St. Thomas, attributes to creatures the power of knowing, or disclosing the future, whereas the power belongs to God alone; divination therefore, according to the saint, is always a sin. Only God knows the future; no created being can by its own power know it. According to the saint, divination often takes the form (indeed, this is usual) of an appeal to demons for knowledge of the future or for knowledge of what one should do now to achieve good or avoid trouble. So, we see that the demonic dimension is very much part of this practice. Speaking now of a specific practice, the saint speaks about astrology.

According to him, divination by the stars is a vain practice because man's future is not determined by heavenly bodies. Besides, he further adds, this is a practice into which evil spirits readily enter to find gullible victims for further bad influencing. We can also apply this when instead of the stars, the lay of the land is used as in geomancy/feng shui. These practices are always sinful according to the saint. We have to keep in mind what St. Thomas mentions; that if we practice these occult activities, the devil will always try to enter into the picture and as much as he can, he would make the "predictions" come true so that man begins to rely on them and his life guided by them (and the evil spirits behind them). A bondage is now formed where the person does not

anymore rely on divine providence but is imprisoned by the system. And the more the person relies on them, the more evil spirits would have the power over the person. When there seems to be evil "predictions," the devil would usually make real in the life of the person what was forecasted; and since the person has turned away from reliance on God and his protection, the evil can come to pass; the person now is bound in fear and the freedom of the person is destroyed by invisible chains.

St. Thomas also speaks of the sinfulness of what is called *magic*[43] (the occult practice of magick and not the magic used by stage magicians which is merely the use of illusion to entertain). He also speaks about the use of charms, formulas of speech (incantations), or other devices to obtain occult knowledge or to control events by evoking occult (demonic) powers. Another term the saint uses for magic is black magic. There is no such thing as white magic, which occult practitioners say is not evil, since magic always uses powers that are not of God. This has always been the teaching of the Church; magic is the language that pertains to the devil while prayer is the language that pertains to God. Magic, according to the saint, debases the mind, dishonors God, and opens the door to diabolic intervention.

Another topic dealt with in the *Summa* is the carrying and wearing of health charms, luck pieces, and the like which is done with the serious intent of profiting by their use. It is, according to the saint, a great evil since it involves a belief in some preternatural force, other than God, which gives to the objects used a magical power; this is a sin against the virtue of religion.

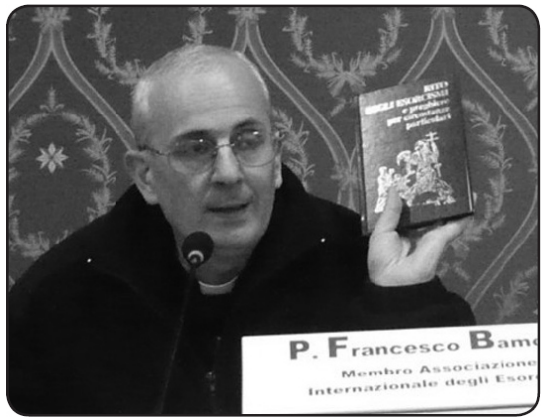
Fortune-telling, St. Thomas says, is an unlawful practice whether it is done by consulting a person, or by using cards, reading tea leaves, looking in a crystal ball, or employing other inept and futile observances. In the Philippines, we have so many other means of fortune-telling that have been handed down from our ancestors that have not yet been purified by our Catholic Faith. Similarly, it is wrong to give serious belief to the omens of luck, good or bad, such as horseshoes, four-leaf clovers, the breaking of a mirror, seeing a black cat, passing under a ladder, and so on. If we believe in them and lack trust in God, the devil will make our fears real so that we become enslaved in this system of fear and lack of trust in God. It is sad that even in the sacraments (like baptisms and weddings) and blessings (like the blessing of the house) of the Church, there are superstitious practices that have infiltrated and become part of these Church ceremonies. There is no such thing as good luck, bad luck, chance, or fate since everything is under the control and power of God; remember that there is no such thing as coincidence in God. There is only divine governance/providence; there is nothing outside the power and control of God.

The *Summa* also discusses the use of incantations (recited or chanted formulas of words or sounds) and the wearing of written words on the person, in the belief that such things have a protective power. Here we are dealing with so-called *orasyon, agimat,* and *anting-anting*. With regard to our Faith, the saint tells us that sacred words and blessed objects (sacramentals of the Church) such as medals must be used in the spirit of reverence to God and never in the way of amulets or luck pieces.

APPENDIX C

An Exorcist Speaks about the Final Battle and Its Aftermath[44]

Fr. Francesco Bamonte states, “This victory already won by Christ in this great ‘war of liberation’ will be definitively and totally realized in the world at the end of time… It will be the fulfillment of history desired by all who love God (cf 1 Cor 16:22; Rv 22:20). Evil will be completely exposed. On that day the demonic forces will be completely defeated with the final victory of Christ and the Blessed Mother Mary over Satan. Falsehood will no longer prevail over truth, the proud will no longer trample upon the humble, justice shall be completely reestablished. The ancient serpent, the devil, will be thrown into the lake of fire and it will be sealed; he will remain there forever and ever (cf Rv 19:20; 20:10; 20:14) and with him all those angels and men who followed him (cf Mt 25:41). The kingdom of God shall forever triumph over the reign of the devil.”



Fr. Francesco Bamonte, a well-known Vatican exorcist and lecturer on the course on Exorcism

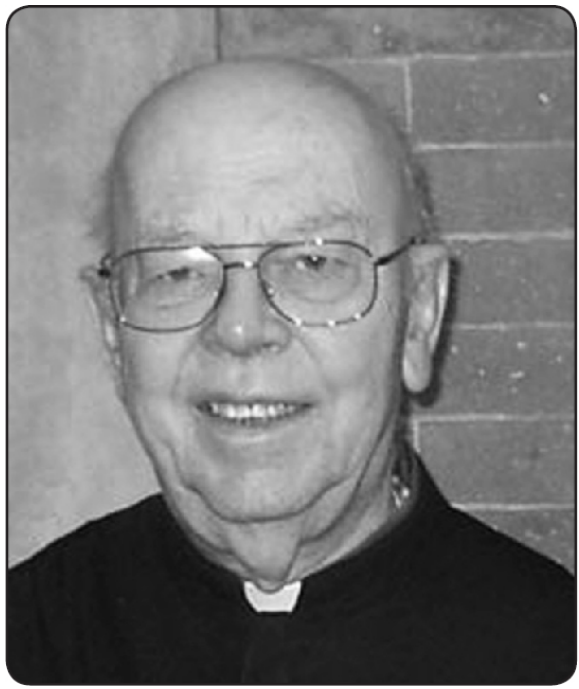
He further discusses what will happen to our bodies and our consciousness; he tells us, "If you, dear brother/dear sister, will be among those who will rise to life, as I hope and wish for you, you will receive a body that is free from imperfections of any sort, very beautiful, eternally youthful, radiant with the same light of the Trinitarian God shining on it from your soul and making it brilliant. You will see Jesus through the eyes of your resurrected body and you will be in full communion with him. You will be like him, though remaining yourself, maintaining your human personality and your unique and unrepeatable identity, because your face will be radiating the same infinite dazzling beauty of his face. St. John affirms this when he says: *'Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is'* (1 Jn 3:2)."

He further adds, *"Your body, which is in perfect felicity and filled with the glory of God, will no longer suffer: 'Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat'* (Rv 7:16). *'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away'* (Rv 21:4). Those physical evils that have afflicted the world from the moment of the original sin will no longer exist; you will no longer be afflicted by any evil or death, but will only experience Goodness which is God himself, whom you will contemplate and possess with unending joy."

He also says, "The qualities of our glorious bodies shall be extraordinary: just like the risen body of Christ that penetrated material bodies (for example, "the closed doors" as we read in Jn 20:19; 20:26), your body will also be agile, that is, firmly controlled by and obedient to the soul, which will be capable of moving it from place to place with absolute speed. And freed from the present limits imposed by matter, it

will be able to pass through solid bodies like light rays pass through glass."

Fr. Bamonte then speaks of the risen life in heaven, "Risen life in the glorious body is the greatest and most extraordinary life that the Trinitarian God has prepared for us: it is a reality that will gratify our every desire, satisfy every need of our heart that seeks to love and be loved beyond measure; it will fulfill every need of our mind that seeks to know everything without limits; it will satisfy every need of our soul that seeks to be absorbed in the infinite and the eternal, to come to the state of supreme and definitive bliss. In the glorification of your body and the beatific vision that you will have in the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God will give himself totally to you in a direct and unveiled manner and you will enjoy an incredible joy possessing him. The Most Holy Trinity will give you the greatest, most beautiful, most wonderful, most pure, and most excellent thing that you could desire or wish, in the perfect sharing and participation in his divine nature."



Fr. Gabriele Amorth, Chief Exorcist of the Vatican

APPENDIX D

Interview with Fr. Gabriele Amorth

Rome's Exorcist Finding Bl. John Paul II Effective against Satan[45]
By David Kerr

Rome, Italy
May 17, 2011/03:27 PM
CNA/EWTN News

The chief exorcist of Rome is seeing a rising number of young people coming under the influence of evil, but he has found in recent years that Blessed John Paul II is a powerful intercessor in the battle for souls.

A small, unassuming office in southwest Rome seems a rather ordinary setting in which to play out a grand battle between good and evil. It is here, though, that Fr. Gabriele Amorth has carried out most of his 70,000 exorcisms over the past 26 years.

"The world must know that Satan exists," he told CNA recently. "The devil and demons are many and they have two powers, the ordinary and the extraordinary."

The 86-year-old Italian priest of the Society of St. Paul and official exorcist for the Diocese of Rome explained the difference.

"The so-called ordinary power is that of tempting man to distance himself from God and take him to hell. This action is exercised against all men and women of all places and religions."

As for the extraordinary powers used by Satan, Fr. Amorth explained it as how the Devil acts when he focuses his attention more specifically on a person. He categorized the expression of that attention into four types: diabolical possession; diabolical vexation like in the case of Padre Pio, who was beaten by the Devil; obsessions which are able to lead a person to desperation and infestation, and when the Devil occupies a

space, an animal, or even an object."

Fr. Amorth says that such extraordinary occurrences are rare but on the rise. He is particularly worried by the number of young people being affected by Satan through sects, séances, and drugs. He never despairs though.

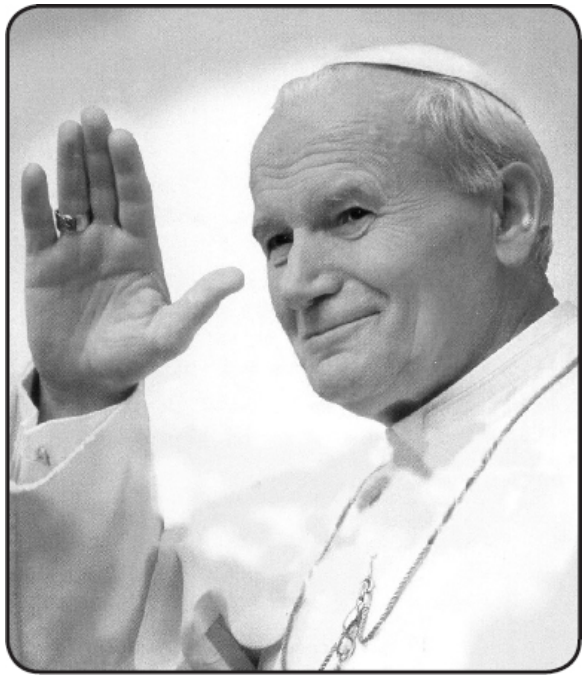
"With Jesus Christ and Mary, God has promised us that he will never allow temptations greater than our strengths."

Hence he gives a very matter-of-fact guide that everybody can use in the fight against Satan.

"The temptations of the Devil are defeated first of all by avoiding occasions (of temptation), because the Devil always seeks out our weakest points. And, then, with prayer. We, Christians, have an advantage because we have the Word of Jesus, we have the sacraments, prayer to God."

Not surprisingly, "Jesus Christ" is the name Fr. Amorth most often calls upon to expel demons. But he also turns to saintly men and women for their heavenly assistance. Interestingly, he said that in recent years one man—Blessed Pope John Paul II—has proved to be a particularly powerful intercessor.

"I have asked the demon more than once, 'Why are you so scared of John Paul II?' and I have had two different responses, both interesting. One, 'Because he disrupted my plans.' And, I think that he is referring to the fall of communism in Russia and Eastern Europe. The collapse of communism."



BLESSED JOHN PAUL II
(1920-2005)

Reigned as Supreme Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church and Sovereign of Vatican City from 16 October 1978 until his death on 2 April 2005. His was the second longest documented pontificate. He is the only Slavic and Polish Pope to date, and was the first non-Italian Pope since Dutch Pope Adrian VI in 1522.

"Another response that he gave me, 'Because he pulled so many young people from my hands.' There are so many young people who, thanks to John Paul II, were converted. Perhaps some were already Christian, but not practicing, but then with John Paul II they came back to the practice. 'He pulled so many young people out of my hands.' "

And the most powerful intercessor of all?

"Of course, the Madonna is even more effective. Ah, when you invoke Mary!"

"And, once I also asked Satan, 'But why are you more scared when I invoke Our Lady than when I invoke Jesus Christ?' He answered me, 'Because I am more humiliated to be defeated by a human creature than being defeated by him.' "

The intercession of the living is also important, though, says Fr. Amorth. He reminds people that exorcism is a prayer and, as such, Christians can pray to liberate a soul or place from the Devil. However, three things are needed.

"The Lord gave them (the Apostles) an answer that also for us,

exorcists, is very important. He said that overcoming this type of demon, you need much faith, much prayer, and much fasting. Faith, prayer, and fasting."

"Especially faith, you need so much faith. Many times also in the healings, Jesus does not say in the Gospel, 'It is me who has healed you.' He says, 'You are healed, thanks to your faith.' He wants faith in the people—a strong and absolute faith. Without faith you can do nothing."

APPENDIX E

Manual of Prayers

I. Marian Prayers

O Mary, Stay with Us, Your Children

by Blessed Pope John Paul II

O Mary, you who crush the head of the evil one,
do not allow us to give in.
Do not allow that we may be defeated by evil,
but rather grant that we may defeat evil with good.
God the Eternal Father bows down to you,
who are victorious in your Immaculate Conception,
and victorious by the power of God himself,
by the power of grace.

Here, the Son, who is the same substance
of the Father and your Son,
crucified and risen from the dead,
bows down to you.
Here the power of the Most High embraces you:
the Holy Spirit, the advocate of sanctity.

The inheritance of sin is foreign to you.
You are "full of grace."
In you the very kingdom of God is established.
In you the "new future" of humanity,
of redeemed humanity, free from sin, is established.
May this future penetrate the darkness
which covers the earth,
which overshadows human hearts and consciences.

Mary, you who know us, stay with us your children!

We know that the annunciation of the angel
is in your ears,
the canticle of praise is on your tongue,
God made child is in your arms,
the cross of Golgotha is in your heart,
the light and the fire of the Holy Spirit
are resting on your head,
and beneath your feet is the Evil One
who has been defeated.

Pray for us to the Redeemer of humanity,
that he may ransom us from sin
and from all that renders us slaves,
and may unite us with the bond of faithfulness
to the Church and to the pastors who guide her.

Show your motherly love to the poor,
to those who suffer,
and to all those who seek the kingdom of your Son.
We thank you with all our heart
for the gift of faith
and we glorify with you the Father of Mercy,
through your Son, Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary
By Blessed Pope John Paul II

Immaculate Virgin Mary,
Mother of God and Mother of the Church,
we consecrate to you,
who try to come ever closer to us,
all of our being and all our love.
We also consecrate to you our life, our work,
our joys, and our sorrows.
We entrust all that we have and all that we are
to your care, Our Lady and Mother.
Teach us to go continually to Jesus,
and if we fall, help us to come back to him
by confessing our sins
in the sacrament of Reconciliation
which gives peace to the soul.
Hold us always lovingly by your hand.

Amen.

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary *(1)*

My Mother, you who always remain with open arms,
imploring your Divine Son for mercy
and compassion for the poor and needy,
ask him to give me his holy love,
his holy fear, and his holy grace,
and grant that I may never commit a mortal sin.
Grant me the grace, O my Mother,
to have for my good Jesus the love and trust
that the saintly should have,
and that my faith, hope, and love may grow,
and I ask you, my Mother,
to teach me to accomplish his divine will at all times.

Holy Virgin, bless my family
and deliver it from all evil.
Help all dying sinners and ask your Divine Son
to forgive them and free them
from the torments of hell.
Intercede for us, my Mother, before your Divine Son
so that the whole world may be saved.
Pray, Mother of mine, for our beloved country,
and free it from the evils which threaten it.
Finally, I ask you to pour forth on our souls
the shining rays of mercy of the Good Lord Jesus,
and to be close to me in all the dangers
I shall encounter in life.
Amen.

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary *(2)*

Most Holy Immaculate Virgin and my Mother Mary,
who are the Mother of my Lord,
the Queen of the world
and the advocate, hope, and refuge of sinners,
I, a miserable creature on earth, turn to you today.
I venerate you, O great Queen,
and thank you for all the graces
which you have given me until now;

above all, for having saved me from being lost.
I love you, most lovable Lady;
and for the love I have for you,
I promise to want to serve you always,
and to do all I can,
so that you may be loved by others, too.
I have placed all my hopes and health
in the hands of Jesus
and now wish to place them in your hands, too.
Accept me as your servant,
and take me under your mantle, O Mother of Mercy.
And as your intercession is so powerful before God,
I ask you to deliver me from all temptations;
or at least give me the strength
to overcome them until my death.
Amen.

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary *(3)*

O Most Holy Virgin,
who called yourself
the humble handmaid of the Lord,
you were chosen by the Most High
to become the Mother of his only-begotten Son,
our Savior Jesus Christ.
We admire your greatness
and invoke your maternal goodness.
We know that you look upon us
with the tenderness of a mother,
because we, too, by the grace of God,
have become your children.
Therefore, we lift up our hearts to you;
we consecrate ourselves to you with filial trust;
we commend ourselves to your heavenly protection
so that you may watch over our path with love.
Gather us into your maternal embrace, O Mary,
as you embraced Jesus, your Divine Son.
Amen.

Prayer to the Virgin Mary, Health of the Sick *(1)*

Most Holy Virgin,

who are honored by the sweet name
of Health of the Sick,
because throughout the ages
you have given relief in human illness,
I beseech you to grant me
and all my dear ones health of body,
or at least the strength to unite our sufferings
to the afflictions of Christ our Redeemer.
Amen.

Prayer to the Virgin Mary, Health of the Sick *(2)*

Most Holy Virgin,
who know not only how to heal
the illnesses of the body,
but also of the soul,
I beseech you to free my soul
and those of my dear ones from every sin,
in order to be always worthy
of the friendship and grace of God.
Amen.

August Queen of Angels

On the 13th of January, 1863, a soul accustomed to receiving favors from the Virgin Mary was suddenly struck by a ray of divine light. She believed that she saw demons, throwing themselves upon the earth, causing ruins and incredible massacres. At the same time the Holy Virgin appeared, saying that demons had indeed broken loose in the world and the time had come to invoke her as Queen of Angels and to ask her to send legions of angels to combat and annihilate the powers of hell. The soul addressed the Virgin with the following words: “O my Mother, you who are so good, could you not send your angels without us having to ask you?” “No,” the Virgin replied, “prayer is a condition established by God himself to obtain graces.” “Then, Mother,” said the soul, “would you like to teach us how we should pray to you?” And the Most Holy Virgin dictated this prayer to her: “O august Queen…”

O august Queen and Our Lady of Angels,
who received from God the power and mission
of crushing the head of Satan,
we humbly beg you to send us heavenly legions,

with St. Michael the Archangel as head
so that under your orders
they may chase the demons,
combat them everywhere,
repress their boldness,
and drive them back into the abyss.

"Who is like God?"
O good and tender Mother,
you shall always be our love and our hope.
O Divine Mother,
send your Holy Angels to defend us,
and to drive away from us the cruel enemy.
Holy Angels and Archangels,
defend us and guard us.
Amen.

Prayer of St. Bernard
(The Memorare)

Remember, O most compassionate Virgin Mary,
that never was it known
that anyone who fled to your protection,
implored your assistance,
or sought your intercession,
was left unaided.

Inspired with this confidence,
we fly unto you,
O Virgin of Virgins, our Mother.
To you we come,
before you we kneel (stand),
sinful and sorrowful.
O Mother of the Word Incarnate,
despise not our petitions,
but in your clemency,
hear and answer them.
Amen.

To Mary, Help of Christians
St. John Bosco

O Mary, powerful Virgin;

you are the great
and most illustrious protection of the Church,
you are the wonderful help of Christians,
you who are formidable as an army sent to battle,
you who alone have destroyed
every heresy in the entire world…
in our distress, in our struggles, in our difficulties,
defend us from the enemy;
and at the hour of death,
welcome our souls into Paradise.
Amen.

Act of Consecration to Christ through Mary

With knowledge of my Christian vocation,
I renew this day in your hands, O Mary,
the commitments of my Baptism.

I renounce Satan, all his works
and all his empty promises,
and I consecrate myself to Jesus Christ,
in order to carry my cross together with him
by fulfilling the duties of my daily life
with faithfulness,
according to the will of the Father.
In the presence of the entire Church,
I acknowledge you as my Mother and queen.
To you I offer and consecrate my being, my life,
and the value of my good works,
those of the past, present, and future.
Dispose of me and of all that belongs to me
for the greater glory of God, in time and in eternity.
Amen.

Consecration of the Sick to our Lady *(1)*

O Virgin Mary, Mother of God and my Mother,
who were present at the crucifixion
and death of your Son Jesus on the hill of Calvary,
have mercy on this poor suffering body of mine and,
through the merits of your sorrows,
grant me relief and comfort.

Amen.

Consecration of the Sick to our Lady *(2)*

O Virgin Mary, Mother of God and my Mother,
who witnessed many sick people being healed
by the sacred hand of your Son Jesus,
grant me faith in his merciful omnipotence,
so that if it be his will,
he may give me the gift of health and serenity.
Amen.

Prayer to the Immaculate Virgin Mary of the Miraculous Medal

Immaculate Virgin Mary,
beloved Daughter of the Father,
dawn of peace promised to fallen humanity,
who had the special privilege
of being preserved from original sin,
grant that we, too, may always resist
the seduction of the evil one
and follow with loving faithfulness
the inspirations of grace
in the generous practice
of the teaching of the Gospel.
Amen.

Prayer to Our Lord Jesus

O Jesus, my Savior, my Lord and my God,
my God and my all,
who, through the sacrifice of the cross,
redeemed us and overcame the power of Satan,
I beseech you to free me
from every harmful presence
and influence of evil.

I ask this in your name;
I ask this for the sake of your wounds,
I ask this through your blood,
I ask this for the sake of your cross,
I ask this through the intercession of Mary,

Immaculate and Virgin, Our Lady of Sorrows.
May the blood and water
which gushed forth from your side
flow down upon me to purify, free, and heal me.
Amen.

Prayer to Mary

O venerable Queen of heaven
and Sovereign of the Angels,
who received the power
and mission from God
to crush the head of Satan,
we humbly beseech you
to send us hosts of angels,
so that at your command,
they may pursue the evil spirits,
and go forth in combat against them
in every place, suppress their audacity,
and drive them into the abyss of hell.
Amen.

Prayer to Our Lady of Manaoag

Glorious and wonderful things
are said about you, O Virgin Mary.
You are the glory and joy of the Christian people.
You are the defender of the poor and rejected.
You are a safe refuge of the persecuted
and a Mother always ready to help us.
Surround us with your loving protection
and keep us under your Mantle,
safe from all that harm us,
O glorious and powerful mother of God,
Our Lady of the Rosary.
Amen.

Entrustment of the Home to Mary, Help of Christians

Most Holy Virgin Mary,
appointed by God to be the Help of Christians,
we choose you as the Mother

and Protectress of our home.
We ask you to favor us
with your powerful protection.
Preserve our home from every danger:
from fire, flood, lightning, storms,
earthquakes, thieves, vandals,
and from every other danger.
Bless us, protect us, defend us, keep us as your own,
all the people who dwell in this home.
Protect them from all accidents
and misfortunes,
but, above all, obtain from them
the most important grace of avoiding sin.
O Mary, Help of Christians,
pray for all those who live in this home
which is entrusted to you for all time.
Amen.

Prayer To Defeat the Work of Satan[46]

O Divine Eternal Father,
in union with your Divine Son
and the Holy Spirit,
and through the Immaculate Heart of Mary,
I beg you to destroy
the power of your greatest enemy
—the evil spirits.

Cast them into the deepest recesses of hell
and chain them there forever!
Take possession of your Kingdom
which you have created
and which is rightfully yours.

Heavenly Father,
give us the reign of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

I repeat this prayer out of pure love for you
with every beat of my heart
and with every breath I take.
Amen.

II. Angel Prayers

Saint Michael Prayer

Saint Michael, the Archangel,
defend us in our hour of battle.
Be our safeguard against the wickedness
and snares of the devil.
May God restrain him, we humbly pray;
and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host,
by the power of God cast Satan into hell
and with him all the evil spirits
who wander through the world
seeking the ruin of souls.
Amen.

Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel

O Saint Michael the Archangel,
enlighten us with your light,
protect us with your wings,
defend us with your sword.

O Saint Michael the Archangel,
defend our home from demons,
and from their wickedness,
and defend it from evil
committed by people of the earth.

O Saint Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle,
so that we may not perish in the last judgment.
Amen.

Prayer for Protection and Salvation

Saint Michael, the Archangel,
help us against the evils
which threaten the salvation of our souls.
Guide us to build up our spiritual life,
and assist us with the means
of obtaining graces, virtues, gifts

of the Holy Spirit and the sacraments,
which keep us in a holy state at all times.
Saint Michael, place your sword at my door;
and at the foot of my bed;
in front of my car when I drive;
and by my side when I walk;
and guard and protect me
against all evil and all temptation.
Amen.

Prayer to St. Gabriel, for Intercession

O Blessed Archangel Gabriel, we beseech you,
intercede for us at the throne of mercy
in our present necessities,
that as you announced to Mary
the mystery of the Incarnation,
so through your prayers
and patronage in heaven
we may obtain the benefits of the same
and sing the praise of God forever
in the land of the living.
Amen.

Saint Raphael Prayer

O God, who in your ineffable goodness
had rendered blessed Raphael
the conductor of your faithful in their journeys,
we humbly implore you
that we may be conducted by him
in the way of salvation,
and experience his help
in the maladies of our bodies and souls.
Through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.
Amen.

Prayer to St. Raphael

St. Raphael, of the glorious seven
who stand before the throne of him
who lives and reigns.

Angel of health!
The Lord has filled your hand
with balm from heaven
to soothe or cure our pains.
Heal or cure the victim of disease
that I pray for now,
and guide our steps in prayer,
and when doubtful of our ways!
Amen.

Short Morning Prayer to Your Guardian Angel

Angel of God, my holy protector,
given to me from heaven by God,
for my protection,
I fervently beseech you:
enlighten me and preserve me from all evil,
instruct me in good deeds,
and direct me on the path of salvation.
Amen.

Angel Prayer

God our Father, in your loving providence
you send your holy angels to watch over us.
Hear our prayers,
defend us always with their protection,
and let us share your life with them forever.
Amen.

Every Guardian Angel Prayer

Angel of God, my guardian dear,
to whom God's love commits me here,
ever this day (or night) be at my side,
to light and guard, to rule and guide.
Amen.

A Mother's Prayer to the Guardian Angel of Her Children

I humbly salute you,

O faithful Friend of my children!
I give you heartfelt thanks for all the love
and goodness you show to them.
At some future day I shall,
with thanks more worthy than I can now give,
repay your care for them,
and before the whole heavenly court
acknowledge their indebtedness
to your guidance and protection.
I ask you to continue to watch over them,
provide for all their needs of body and soul.
Pray, also, for me and for my whole family,
that we may all one day rejoice
in your blessed company in heaven.
Amen.

Prayer to Our Guardian Angel

Dear Angel, in his goodness God gave you to me
to guide, protect, and enlighten me,
and to bring me back to the right way
when I go astray.
Encourage me when I am disheartened,
and instruct me when I err in judgment.
Help me to become more Christlike,
and so, someday to be accepted
into the company of the angels
and saints in heaven.
Amen.

St. Gertrude's Guardian Angel Prayer

O most holy angel of God,
appointed by God to be my guardian,
I give you thanks for all the benefits
which you have ever bestowed on me
in body and in soul.
I praise and glorify you
that you condescended to assist me
with such patient fidelity,
and to defend me
against all the assaults of my enemies.

Blessed be the hour
in which you were assigned to me
for my guardian, my defender, and my patron.
In acknowledgment and return
for all your loving ministries to me,
I offer you the infinitely precious
and noble heart of Jesus,
and firmly purpose to obey you henceforth,
and most faithfully to serve my God.
Amen.

III. Prayer to the Saints

The saints are one of our allies in the spiritual battle. Invoking them during deliverance and exorcism sessions has been proven very effective in warding off and expelling evil spirits. Because of the holy lives they lived while on earth, they are now closely united to God in heaven and emanate the glory of God. For this reason, their intercession for us doing battle on this earth is powerful indeed. How many times during deliverance prayers have we (AMOE) been aided in expelling demons by calling on the intercession of the saints especially those who had endured intense spiritual warfare while they were still alive. It is therefore recommended that all have recourse to them for help and protection. We must never forget them in our battle against the fallen angels since they are the Church Triumphant in intimate communion with us, the Church Militant.

Litany of the Saints

Lord, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.
God, the Father of heaven, *have mercy on us.*
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *have mercy on us.*
God the Holy Spirit, *have mercy on us.*
Holy Trinity, one God, *have mercy on us.*
Holy Mary, *pray for us.*

Holy Mother of God, *pray for us.*
Holy Virgin of virgins, *pray for us.*
St. Michael, *pray for us.*
St. Gabriel, *pray for us.*
St. Raphael, *pray for us.*
All you holy Angels and Archangels, *pray for us.*
St. John the Baptist, *pray for us.*
St. Joseph, *pray for us.*
All you holy Patriarchs and Prophets, *pray for us.*
St. Peter, *pray for us.*
St. Paul, *pray for us.*
St. Andrew, *pray for us.*
St. James, *pray for us.*
St. John, *pray for us.*
St. Thomas, *pray for us.*
St. James, *pray for us.*
St. Philip, *pray for us.*
St. Bartholomew, *pray for us.*
St. Matthew, *pray for us.*
St. Simon, *pray for us.*
St. Jude, *pray for us.*
St. Matthias, *pray for us.*
St. Barnabas, *pray for us.*
St. Luke, *pray for us.*
St. Mark, *pray for us.*
All you holy Apostles and Evangelists, *pray for us.*
All you holy Disciples of the Lord, *pray for us.*
All you holy Innocents, *pray for us.*
St. Stephen, *pray for us.*
St. Lawrence, *pray for us.*
St. Vincent, *pray for us.*
Sts. Fabian and Sebastian, *pray for us.*
Sts. John and Paul, *pray for us.*
Sts. Cosmas and Damian, *pray for us.*
All you holy Martyrs, *pray for us.*
St. Sylvester, *pray for us.*
St. Gregory, *pray for us.*
St. Ambrose, *pray for us.*
St. Augustine, *pray for us.*
St. Jerome, *pray for us.*
St. Martin, *pray for us.*
St. Nicholas, *pray for us.*
All you holy Bishops and Confessors, *pray for us.*

All ye, holy Doctors, *pray for us.*
St. Anthony, *pray for us.*
St. Benedict, *pray for us.*
St. Dominic, *pray for us.*
St. Francis, *pray for us.*
All ye, holy Priests and Levites, *pray for us.*
All ye, holy Monks and Hermits, *pray for us.*
St. Mary Magdalene, *pray for us.*
St. Agatha, *pray for us.*
St. Lucy, *pray for us.*
St. Agnes, *pray for us.*
St. Cecilia, *pray for us.*
St. Anastasia, *pray for us.*
St. Catherine, *pray for us.*
St. Clare, *pray for us.*
All ye, holy Virgins and Widows, *pray for us.*
All ye, holy Saints of God, *pray for us.*

Lord, be merciful,
Lord, save your people.
From all evil,
Lord, save your people.
From all sin,
Lord, save your people.
From your wrath,
Lord, save your people.
From a sudden and unprovided death
Lord, save your people.
From the snares of the devil,
Lord, save your people.
From anger, hatred, and all ill will,
Lord, save your people.
From the spirit of uncleanness,
Lord, save your people.
From lightning and tempest,
Lord, save your people.
From the scourge of earthquake,
Lord, save your people.
From plague, famine, and war,
Lord, save your people.
From everlasting death,
Lord, save your people.

By the mystery of your holy incarnation,

Lord, save your people.
By your coming,
Lord, save your people.
By your birth,
Lord, save your people.
By your baptism and holy fasting,
Lord, save your people.
By your cross and passion,
Lord, save your people.
By your death and burial,
Lord, save your people.
By your holy resurrection,
Lord, save your people.
By your wonderful ascension,
Lord, save your people.
By the coming of the Holy Spirit,
Lord, save your people.
On the day of judgment,
Lord, save your people.

Be merciful to us sinners,
Lord, hear our prayer.
That you will spare us,
Lord, hear our prayer.
That you will pardon us,
Lord, hear our prayer.
That it may please you to bring us
to true penance,
Lord, hear our prayer.
Guide and protect your holy Church,
Lord, hear our prayer.
Preserve in holy religion the Pope,
and all those in Holy Orders,
Lord, hear our prayer.
Humble the enemies of holy Church,
Lord, hear our prayer.
Give peace and unity
to the whole Christian people,
Lord, hear our prayer.
Bring back to the unity of the Church
all those who are straying,
and bring all unbelievers
to the light of the Gospel,

Lord, hear our prayer.
Strengthen and preserve us in your holy service,
Lord, hear our prayer.
Raise our minds to desire the things of heaven,
Lord, hear our prayer.
Reward all our benefactors
with eternal blessings,
Lord, hear our prayer.
Deliver our souls from eternal damnation,
and the souls of our brethren, relatives,
and benefactors,
Lord, hear our prayer.
Give and preserve the fruits of the earth,
Lord, hear our prayer.
Grant eternal rest to all the faithful departed,
Lord, hear our prayer.

That it may please you to hear and heed us,
Jesus, Son of the Living God,
Lord, hear our prayer.
Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
Spare us, O Lord!
Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
Graciously hear us, O Lord!
Lamb of God
who takes away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us,
Christ, graciously hear us.
Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.
Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.

ENDNOTES

1 Matt Baglio, *The Rite: The Making of a Modern Exorcist* (New York: Doubleday, 2009), 177.

2 *Ibid*., 178.

3 I have changed some details to protect the identity of the victim and to facilitate the narrative.

4 The rest of the teaching of this chapter and the next is based on the book of St. Alphonsus de Liguori, *The Glories of Mary*.

5 I have changed some details to facilitate the narrative.

6 See 1 Kgs 18:16b-40.

7 Carl J. Sommer, *We Look for a Kingdom: The Everyday Lives of the Early Christians* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 19.

8 *Ibid.,* 20.

9 *Ibid.,* 18.

10 *Ibid.,* 20-21.

11 Father Delaporte of the Society of Mercy, *The Devil: Does He Exist and What Does He Do?* (Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1982), 26.

12 Leon Cristiani, *Evidence of Satan in the Modern World* (Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1961), 175.

13 *Ibid. 7,* at 25.

14 *Ibid. 7,* at 112.

15 H.W. Crocker III, *Triumph: The Power and the Glory of the Catholic Church* (New York, New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001), 40.

16 *Ibid.* 7, at 224-225.

17 *Ibid.* 15, at 39.

18 *Ibid.* 7, at 228-229.

19 *Ibid.* 7, at 222.

20 *Ibid.* 15, at 41-42.

21 *Ibid.* 7, at 222.

22 Father Jose Antonio Fortea, *Interview with an Exorcist*: *An Insider's Look at the Devil, Demonic Possession, and the Path to Deliverance* (West

Chester, Pennsylvania: Ascension Press, 2006), 110-111.

23 Rafael Brown, *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* (Garden City, New York, Image Books, 1958), 92-93.

24 See Teresa of Avila, *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila Vol 1*. Trans. Kieran Kavanaugh, OCD and Otilio Rodriguez, OCD (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1976).

25 See Birgitta of Sweden, *Birgitta of Sweden: Life and Selected Revelations* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1990), 313-314. I also included in the account my own personal comments.

26 See Abbe Francois Trochu, *The Cure d'Ars: St. Jean-Marie-Baptiste Vianney* (Rockford, Illinois: TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., 1977).

27 See Maria Faustina Kowalska, *Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul* (Stockbridge, Massachusetts, 2001).

28 Sister Lucia, *Calls: From the Message of Fatima* (Portugal: Secretariado dos Pastorinhos), 101.

29 Timothy Costello, *Forming a Priestly Identity* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 2002), 139.

30 *Ibid.,* 141.

31 *Ibid.*

32 *Ibid.,* 144.

33 George Weigel, *The Courage To Be Catholic: Crisis, Reform, and the Future of the Church* (NY: Basic Books, 2002), 38.

34 Antonio Padovano, "Catholic Movements Under Fire," *Inside the Vatican.* August–September (USA: Urbi et Orbi Communications, 1996), 46-47.

35 L.M. Rulla S.J., F. Imoda S.J. and J. Sr. Ridick S.S.C., *Psychological Structure and Vocation* (Roma: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1995), 194.

36 Although the story is my own personal experience, I have added some details to facilitate the narrative and protect the identity of the victim.

37 Corrado Balducci, *The Devil: "…Alive and Active in Our World"* (Manila: St. Paul Publications, 1992), 96.

38 See Father Jose Antonio Fortea, *Interview with an Exorcist: An Insider's Look at the Devil, Demonic Possession, and the Path to Deliverance* (West Chester, Pennsylvania: Ascension Press, 2006).

39 See Francesco Bamonte, *Diabolical Possession and Exorcism: How To Recognize the Shrewd Deceiver.* Trans. Rev. Fr. Benedict Ejeh (Somolu, Lagos, Nigeria: Bertie-John (Nig.) Printers, 2008).

40 See Francesco Bamonte, *Diabolical Possession and Exorcism: How To Recognize the Shrewd Deceiver*. Trans. Rev. Fr. Benedict Ejeh (Somolu, Lagos, Nigeria: Bertie-John (Nig.) Printers, 2008).

41 These souls may appear to people with God's permission for the consolation of those left behind and for prayers. We see this especially in the lives of the saints.

42 This treatise is based on the book of Msgr. Paul J. Glenn, *A Tour of the Summa: A Journey through St. Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologica*.

43 I will use the word magic in this chapter to denote occult rites and rituals and not the word magick which is actually a more appropriate name. I seem to have encountered more the latter spelling of the word in older writings on the occult.

44 See Francesco Bamonte, *Diabolical Possession and Exorcism: How to Recognize the Shrewd Deceiver*. Trans. Rev. Fr. Benedict Ejeh. Somolu. Lagos, Nigeria: Bertie-John (Nig.) Printers, 2008.

45 "Rome's exorcist finding Bl. John Paul II effective against Satan," Catholic News Agency, http,://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/romes-exorcist-finding-bl.-john-paul-ii-effective-against-satan/- (accessed May 19, 2011).

46 "Prayer Against Satan and Evil Ones," Thoughts To Live By…, 18 May 2011 http://thoughtstoliveby.wordpress.com/2009/02/01/.

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